

Practical Pre-School

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Awards 2018

The essential product guide for everyone working with young children



In association with

PRIMARY
TEACHER UPDATE

The latest award-winning products for children aged 0-11, all tried and tested by you

Providing expert guidance for early years professionals



The monthly for the 0-5 team

Early Years Educator (EYE) helps its readers understand how the latest educational thinking and government policy can be interpreted to improve the provision offered to children - helping each child to develop, thrive and achieve to their best potential. EYE will help you:

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Welcome to the 2018 Practical Pre-School Awards in association with Primary Teacher Update



This supplement is the definitive guide to the award-winning, innovative products available now.

Welcome to the 2018 issue of the annual Practical Pre-School Awards Guide, brought to you by *Practical Pre-School* and *Primary Teacher Update*. These annual awards are for products aimed at professional childcare and educational settings, and products that are aimed at all of primary education covering key stages 1 and 2.

We are delighted to provide you with this annual guide packed with information about the wide range of exciting products that have been expertly designed for your use and for the benefit of the children in your care. So, whether you work in an early years setting, in childcare or in a primary school, the details in this guide will be of relevance and benefit to you and your teams.

The *Practical Pre-School* Awards attract a wide range of entries from a broad mix of companies. The *Primary Teacher Update* Awards scheme, which runs in conjunction with the *Practical Pre-School* Awards, is designed to include products that are aimed at children in primary education, aged from five to 11-years-old. This Awards Guide will give you useful guidance that will help you when choosing what products to use with the children and incorporate into your teaching.

All of the products in the awards have been tried and tested rigorously in at least two separate settings by an independent panel of testers, including the children themselves. Testers marked the equipment against a pre-defined set of criteria which included elements such as appeal to the children at the start and end of the trial, play value, durability, adaptability, educational values, ease-of-use, originality, value for money and more.

With 90 per cent or more needed for products to attain a gold award, 80 to 89 per cent needed for silver to be achieved and 70 to 79 per cent required for bronze, the entries were all competing within a strict scoring system. Each category's coveted overall winner is defined by the product in that category with the highest overall score. The scoring system is designed to highlight the outstanding quality of these products, the innovation that has gone into creating them and the commitment of the product suppliers and manufacturers in providing you with exceptional products.

So please read on to find out what this year's successful products are and use the information in the guide to help you make clear and considered judgments when deciding what new products to invest in or recommend.

Our thanks go to our team of testers, the full list of whom can be found on page 4 of this publication and well done to all the winners, gold, silver and bronze.

Cover image: Alex Deverill at Cyprus Primary School, Croydon

Practical Pre-School

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PRIMARY TEACHER UPDATE
Supporting the teaching team in delivering best practice

Thanks

Would you like to be a tester?

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**PRIMARY
TEACHER
UPDATE**
Supporting the teaching team in delivering best practice

Would you like to be part of the panel responsible for selecting the best quality resources for childcare, early years and key stage 1 and 2 settings? If the answer is 'yes', then read on. We are now recruiting for testers for the 2019 *Practical Pre-School* and *Primary Teacher Update* Awards.

As part of the judging process for the *Practical Pre-School* and *Primary Teacher Update* Awards this year, around 180 individual tests were completed in a number of nursery, playgroup, pre-school, key stage 1 and 2 classes, and childminding settings throughout the country.

So what can you expect? You will receive an entered product at your setting, after which you will have three weeks to test it. You will then need to return your test report on a supplied form. These reports are clear, with marks awarded for pre-determined criteria and a section for additional comments.

In the majority of cases, testers will be able to keep their entry samples as a token of our appreciation. However in some cases – or for very expensive items – these may have to be returned. Should this be the case, a collection service is organised so that there are no expenses incurred by the setting.

Being a tester is a lot of fun. However it does require some work and the ability to keep to a strict deadline.

If you feel you have what it takes and would like to be considered for the 2019 testing panel, please send a letter to the organisers, or an email to the address below. You will then be asked to complete and return a detailed form to qualify for a place.

Applications must be received by 31 December 2018. The panel will be selected in early 2019.

To be considered for the testing panel, apply before 31 December 2018 to: awards@practicalpreschool.com

Alternatively, write to: Karen Faux, Editor Practical Pre-School Awards. St Judes Church, Dulwich Road, Herne Hill London, SE24.

A big thank you to all those who tested the products for our 2018 awards. We hope you enjoyed it!
If you would like to be a tester, see above, and ensure that you contact us before 31 December 2018.

Playgroup	Aly Llewellyn-Slade	The Pines Pre-School	Jacqui Pattison	Clarecroft Day Nursery	Natasha Obee and
Lollipops Childcare	Amanda King	Thornton Childcare	Jane and Tim Thornton		Gemma Richardson
Hickory House Day Nursery	Andrea Barlone	Parent	Jessica Russel	Barnston Buddies	Nicky Prance
Your Child Matters Childminding Service	Ann Ross	Jollytots	Julia Trainer	Marcham Pre-school	Nicky Sanford
Norton Pre-school	Anne Gladwish	Julie Stephens Childminding	Julie Stephens	Parent	Rebecca Tew
Anne's Childminding Service	Anne Leslie	Piglets of Weedon	Karen Eccles	Sally Clare Registered Childminder	Sally Clare
Parent	Anne Rodgers	Kids Korner Nursery	Karen Taylor	Childminder	Sam Goldsworthy
Bright Sparks Nursery	Carolyn Below	Parent	Katie-Ann Sharp	Morda Village Pre-School	Sam Griffiths
Childminder	Claire Hosken	Childminder	Kirstie King	SJH Childminding	Shetha Shaw
Childminder	Clare Tilney	Laura Donjon Childminding	Laura Donjon	SM Childminding	Sue and Emma
Scamps	Debbie Cetra	Chelmondiston Playgroup	Lavinia Dzundza	Burwell Early Learners	Tracy Parr
KaiDrums Childcare	Debbie Raheem	Kingswood Playgroup	Linzie Clark	Bright Sparks Nursery	Tracy Parr
Grafton Childcare	Denise Tupman	St James' Toddler Group	Liz McAnaw	Busy Little Fingers Childminding	Val Madeley
Home from Home Childminding	Diane Goves	Braunston Pre-school	Lynda Crooks	Yelvertoft Primary School	Val Middleton
Chewton Common Playgroup	Helen Dow	Ogley Hay Nursery School	Margaret Turley	Tilda Henry's	Victoria Williams-Lilley
Parent	Helen Hancock	Ladybird Pre-School Ltd.	Maria Matthews	Ladybirds Pre-School (Porchester Road Site)	Zoe Marler-Hausen
Helen & Friends	Helen Perks	Childminder	Natalie Highett		

PlayScapes Mobile Dressing Up Trolley

Manufacturer: Spaceright Europe Ltd - Millhouse

Tel: 01236 853 120

Web: www.inspirationalnurseries.co.uk

Price: £315.00

Age range: 3 years +

Description: Sturdy, double sided dressing up unit made from scratch resistant and easy clean maple melamine. Features 6 coat hooks on each side and a full length safety mirror. Also includes:

- Storage area for accessories, props etc. in top and base of trolley
- Supplied with 3 clear tubs for visible storage
- Lockable castors

Score: 96.2%

What the testers said: "This unit was thoroughly enjoyed by pre-school age children and it proved sturdy and well built. They enjoyed self-selecting



role-play outfits from the pegs and accessories from the boxes. It was great for them to be able to help tidy the dressing-up items away easily."

"Children loved hanging up the baby clothes and filling up the boxes with accessories and they even used the bottom storage section as a bed. We liked that the unit is mobile which means it can be taken outside."



Inspirational Nurseries

Inspirational Nurseries is an exciting range of furniture, resources and role play products, specially designed for early years.



For more information contact Daphne Lansbury:
07879 558 703 | daphnelansbury@millhouse-md.co.uk

www.inspirationalnurseries.co.uk



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www.inspirationalnurseries.co.uk



Honey Bee Number Kit

Publisher: Yellow Door

Tel: 01223 328 051

Web: www.yellow-door.net

Price: £30 (+vat)

Age range: 3 years +

Description: This kit will create a buzz around early maths for young children just learning to recognise numbers up to 10. It encourages sequencing and recognising number patterns, as well as learning about bees themselves. The honey bee stones are tactile while the activity cards are designed to be robust for repeated outdoor use.

Score: 94.6%

What the testers said:

"The children liked the size and texture of the bees. It's great that the boards are wipe-clean and durable. We liked the fact they could be used in different ways."

"These are fantastic for what they are intended for. They make matching and using numbers fun. The bright attractive bees encourage reluctant learners to take part. They are also easily stored."



Kinderly

Supplier: NurseryBook Ltd

Tel: 07771 725 905

Web: www.kinderly.co.uk

Price: from £10 + VAT

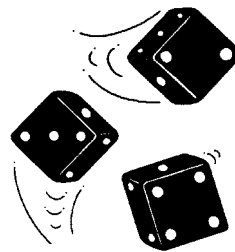
Age range: 0-5 years

Description: Kinderly's award-winning online learning journal, invoicing and accounting package enables childcare professionals to securely record EYFS observations, developmental progress and keep daily diaries without paperwork.

Using Kinderly improves efficiency, enabling practitioners to spend more time with the children, with the added bonus of enhancing parent communication. Nursery Book also provides the at-a-glance information required for Ofsted.

Score: 88.5%

What the testers said: "This product provides a database holding details for all children. The great benefit is that you have all the information under one tool and once the database is set up, it's quite easy to navigate between each section. Users can keep and interlink the data for each individual child, cross referencing different information including observations and learning progress."



Bronze Awards

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TickiT Wooden Forest Animal Blocks

Overall winner

Manufacturer: Commotion Ltd**Tel:** 01732 773 399**Web:** www.commotion.co.uk**Price:** £59.99**Age range:** 12 months +

Description: Features 30 smooth, chunky birch plywood blocks, colour-printed on both sides with photo images of wild animals from forest and woodland environments. Younger children will learn to recognise the insects, birds and mammals, and engage in imaginative play, while older children can visualise them for story-telling and creative writing.

Score: 97.0%

What the testers said: "These wooden animal blocks have been the most played with resource since they arrived and proved great for open-ended play. The blocks are very well-made and smooth to the touch. They are exactly the right size for small hands and can be easily cleaned. We found they encouraged children to engage in lots of educational discussion about the animals, using new vocabulary about the noises they make, where they live and characteristics such as stripes and spots."

"When opening the box, my son's reaction was 'wow'! I thought the blocks were well-designed and made."



inspire • engage • educate

www.tickit.co.uk**Wooden Farm Blocks**

SSP £49.99 - Set of 25

**Wooden Forest Animal Blocks**

SSP £59.99 - Set of 30

**Wooden Community People Blocks**

SSP £59.99 - Set of 32



Beautiful chunky birch plywood block sets, colour-printed on both sides with real images of people in the community, farmyard favourites and wild animals.

Retail Sales

TickiT® products are sold by over 120 educational suppliers in the UK, including the following:



For further information please contact us:

info@commotion.co.uk
01732 773399



TickiT® is owned & distributed by Commotion.

2-in-1 Sports Centre

Manufacturer: VTech Electronics**Tel:** 01235 555 545**Web:** www.vtech.co.uk**Price:** £39.99**Age range:** 12-36 months

Description: Cheer on your little sports star with the 2-in-1 Sports Centre. Throw the basketball into the hoop to score points, or kick the football into the net to hear fun sounds and counting. Press buttons, spin the gears and turn pages to learn about shapes, numbers and more.

Score: 93.8%

What the testers said: "Once this toy was set up it instantly appealed to our first young tester, a boy of 27 months. He loved 'posting' both balls through the net and enjoyed the counting. He also had fun pushing buttons and moving along to the melodies. We didn't get to hear all the possible melodies but that could be a good thing as there was no chance of thinking 'oh not that tune again'!"

When the toy went unused for a minute, it played a tune and spoke which re-engaged the child, and it was clear they were listening to the instructions.



We liked the fact it had two different volumes. Overall a great toy for the younger age range."

"Our youngest children loved it. It was very easy to put together and required little instruction. This toy is very interactive and encouraged lots of communication. It was clear and easy for the children to use."



Spike the Fine Motor Hedgehog

Manufacturer: Learning Resources**Tel:** 01553 818 063**Web:** www.learningresources.co.uk**Price:** £16.00**Age range:** From 18 months

Description: Ideal for toddlers, this hedgehog-themed learning toy will develop a variety of key early learning skills, including:

- Children insert and remove Spike's quills as they build fine motor skills
- Two-piece hedgehog encourages colour recognition and sorting skills with his colourful quills

- Quills feature four common colours: red, orange, green and purple.

Score: 91.5%

What the testers said: "The spikes are well-made and they are easy to store within the hedgehog itself.

We liked the fact it is so colourful and easy to use. Good for learning colours, counting and sorting. It also supported fine motor skills and memory. We discovered that it can be taken anywhere!"



TickiT Wooden Farm Blocks

Manufacturer: Commotion Ltd**Tel:** 01732 773 399**Web:** www.commotion.co.uk**Price:** £49.99**Age range:** 12 months +

Description: The 25 smooth, chunky birch plywood blocks are colour-printed on both sides with real images of farm animals, farmers, scenery and a tractor. Ideal for small hands, enabling younger children to make comparisons with real animals. Older children will enjoy using them to visualise characters in story-telling and creative writing.

Score: 91.5%

What the testers said: "These blocks provide a great prompt for developing imagination and small world play. They are strong, durable and practical. The pictures are visually appealing for all ages and they can be added to other toys or played with on their own. They are great for increasing vocabulary, talking about

people who help us and learning about the world."

"A lovely product. The chunky pieces are suitable for little hands with no choking hazard. Each block is double sided with real images to promote language skills in very young children, through small world play. The blocks are hard-wearing and could easily withstand rough play. Good value for money as we believe they will last for many years. The perfect resource for any early years setting."

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TickiT Wooden Community People Blocks

Manufacturer: Commotion Ltd

Tel: 01732 773 399

Web: www.commotion.co.uk

Price: £59.99

Age range: 12 months +

Description: 32 smooth, chunky birch plywood blocks colour-printed on both sides with real images of children and adults representing a variety of ages, professions, religions and disabilities. Supports younger children to recognise and relate to other people, while older children can visualise characters for story telling and learn about different cultures or backgrounds.

Score: 89.6%

What the testers said: "This is a lovely product that is very versatile."

The blocks proved immediately appealing and sparked lots of discussions around the children's observations of people – with children listening to their peers' ideas and thoughts, and then contributing their own. They have been used in imaginative role-play, and encourage turn-taking. We liked that they were suitable for all age groups and are easy to store because they are flat."



Stickle Bricks Farm and Fire Engine Sets

Distributor: Flair Plc.

Tel: 01327 227 010

Web: www.flairplc.co.uk

Price: £16.99 each

Age range: 18 months +

Description: The perfect first construction toy for babies and toddlers. These Stickle Bricks sets with themed pieces offer endless building possibilities and role-play opportunities. What's more the Lids double as a play base for added value!

Score: 88.5%

What the testers said: "This had immediate appeal for all our children. Easily stored away and easy to take with you anywhere. Helps fine motor skills and inspires children to take apart and rebuild in their own way."

"Very durable and easy to use."

"The children loved this toy and played with it for ages. They asked to play with them over again so this told me they have sustained appeal. They are easily put together. A lovely toy for younger children."



Shapes & Sharing Picnic Basket

Manufacturer: LeapFrog Toys

Tel: 01235 555 545

Web: www.leapfrog.co.uk

Price: £22.99

Age range: 6 months +

Description: Pack a picnic for two and pretend to snack on yummy treats while exploring food, shapes and colours. Then, put the pieces back in the basket for fun on the go!

Score: 88.5%

What the testers said: "The Shapes & Sorting Picnic Basket had an immediate appeal for the children. It promoted turn-taking and imaginative play, as well as supporting mathematical development. Children loved taking all the items out and 'having a picnic'. The interactive talking/singing feature was appealing to younger children. They liked the picnic basket, as they enjoyed carrying things around and filling and emptying containers. The handle and shape of the basket makes it ideal for this. They also liked putting the shapes in the correct holes and working out that they could get a verbal response by pressing the little levers on the edges of the holes, as well as putting the shapes into the correct holes."



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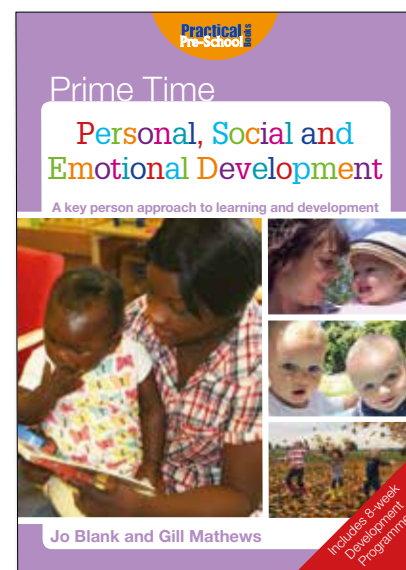
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**Practical
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Books**

Look and Find Alphabet Jigsaw

Manufacturer: Orchard Toys**Tel:** 01953 859 526**Web:** www.orchardtoys.com**Price:** £8**Age range:** 3 years +

Description: Two alphabet activity jigsaws in one box – great value, great fun! One jigsaw shows the letters of the alphabet and the other a fun scene. After piecing together both the puzzles, children can use them together by matching the items on both to encourage them to identify letters and sounds.

Score: 100%

What the testers said: "A lovely, bright and cheerful jigsaw. Children loved working together to connect the pieces. The puzzle pieces are great sizes for little hands. Highly recommended."



Overall winner

Smart Tech Engine Set with Action Tunnels

Manufacturer: BRIO**Tel:** 01604 588 111**Web:** www.BRIO.net**Price:** £89.95**Age range:** 3 years +

Description: SMART Tech brings life and action to our new SMART Engine, creating an opportunity for new adventures to unfold. It can start and stop, change direction and speed, honk its horn and flash its lights – all depending on how the child wants it to happen.

Score: 96.7%

What the testers said: "This had instant appeal and worked like magic! The train and tunnels communicate to each other, and can send the train backwards, flash its lights, sound its horn or bring it to a stop. The children had great fun

moving the tunnels around, sending the train and its passengers on all sorts of adventures. This extended imaginative play and supported ICT. The tunnels can be moved around and the set is also compatible with other Brio as long as this engine is used. We loved this!"

"Children were very excited about building the new track together and it held their attention for a long period of time. They enjoyed using the tunnels and swapping them around to make the train perform different actions. This product proved very good for developing children's technology skills and understanding."



Design and Drill® My First Workbench

Manufacturer: Learning Resources**Tel:** 01553 818 063**Web:** www.learningresources.co.uk**Price:** £38.00**Age range:** 3-5 years

Description: An innovative creative construction set that powers up the imagination of junior builders from as young as 3, as they hammer and drill directly into a play bench to create colourful designs. Great for building STEM skills.

Score: 93.8%

What the testers said: "This had immediate appeal for children. Excellent for developing fine motor skills, by pushing, pulling and twisting. Using the tools also helps with hand-eye co-ordination. We liked the design ideas and feel they provide good extension activities for older or more able children."

The drill was easy to use. Great for developing fine motor skills and plenty of scope for creativity. It also offered opportunities for mathematical skills and problem solving. Overall, a fun toy that is appealing and engaged the children immediately."



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Zingo

Manufacturer: ThinkFun

Tel: 01604 588 111

Web: www.Amazon.co.uk

Price: £14.99

Age range: 4 years +

Description: This innovative game encourages pre-readers and early readers alike to match the pictures and words on their challenge cards with the tiles revealed in the Zingo! Zingo device.

Score: 91.9%

What the testers said:

"Both the staff and children loved it. A child with additional needs recognised the pictures and could label some which promoted her language skills. It supports turn-taking and anticipation of what's coming next. All the children were eager to join in, including the children least-expected to sit and play. It maintained their interest and they were keen to play again."

"A lovely game, which the children enjoyed playing!"



Peppa's Interactive Playmat

Manufacturer: Trends UK

Tel: 01295 768 078

Web: www.trendsuk.co.uk

Price: £19.99rrp

Age range: 3 years +

Description: Join Peppa and explore lots of fun activities with the interactive floor mat. Get active while having fun and learn with four fun modes including 'Peppa Says...', a numbers game, 'Where is...?' and a singalong mode. Designed to encourage early number and colour recognition, speech and communication and memory, concentration and attention skills.

Score: 89.2%

What the testers said: "The appeal of Peppa ensured that children were engaged."



Dinosaur Lotto

Manufacturer: Orchard Toys

Tel: 01953 859 526

Web: www.orchardtoys.com

Price: £7.75

Age range: Age 3-7 years

Description: A colourful, dinosaur themed matching and memory game perfect for young dinosaur enthusiasts! Enhance the simple lotto game play by turning over the boards to the blank side for a more challenging match.

Score: 87.3%

What the testers said: "The children found it easy to follow the instructions and really enjoyed playing this game."

"It is wonderfully designed and made. The concept is simple and the instructions are so clear that you can open the box and immediately begin to play. It teaches the children to take turns, recognise and make pictures as well as remember positions of items, so it has great educational value. I liked the way that there was a slightly more difficult version of the game which you could play with older children as this would maximise the usage of the product."



Bronze Awards

**Super Wings
Transforming Vehicles
Alpha Animation**



PlayScapes Slumberstore

Manufacturer: Spaceright Europe Ltd - Millhouse**Tel:** 01236 853 120**Web:** www.inspirationalnurseries.co.uk**Price:** from £570.00**Age range:** 18 months +

Description: PlayScapes Slumberstore is a creative nap time solution which cleverly combines comfortable sleep mats with space saving, efficient storage. Slumberstore units are beautifully made from premium maple melamine with solid beech features which are sturdy, durable and easy to clean. Supplied with 10 high quality sleep mats.

Score: 93.1%

What the testers said: "The sleep mats are a perfect size for 1 - 4 year olds. They are easy to clean, durable, soft, comfortable for sleeping and the children testing the mats slept very well. They pack away neatly in the storage unit which is strong and sturdy. We particularly liked the compact design, making it suitable for a setting with minimal storage space. Overall, we think this is a fantastic product and an excellent addition to any nursery environment."

"A great product. The children enjoyed the mats if they needed a nap and they were also used for our mindfulness lessons."



Overall winner



DoddleBags

Supplier: DoddleCreation Ltd**Tel:** 07525 420 589**Web:** www.doddlebags.com**Price:** £10.99**Age range:** 6 months +

Description: DoddleBags are multi-functional reusable pouches designed by a mum on a mission! The spoon, paint brush and icing nozzle attachments make DoddleBags ideal for food, art projects, days out and more. Loved by kids and teachers alike, they are easy to fill and clean. Less mess, stress, waste and less landfill.

Score: 85.9%

What the testers said: "The DoddleBags and Doddle spoon set is a very unique product. There are multiple ways of using it and it's suitable for all ages. The DoddleSpoon set is great for weaning, making it easy for young children to hold the spoon and feed themselves. The bag is a great size too. I love the fact it can go in the dishwasher and the freezer, which has been very handy. It's also great for adults to freeze smoothies, so overall, a brilliant buy."

"DoddleBags have the advantage of cutting down on plastic waste. They are washable, portable and can be re-used. A great way to assist independence in young children who want to begin feeding themselves."



Cuddledry Original handsfree towel

Manufacturer: Cuddledry Ltd**Tel:** 07881 807 762**Web:** www.cuddledry.com**Price:** £29.99**Age range:** birth to 18 months

Description: The Cuddledry hands-free towel is made using a signature bamboo and cotton mix. It's bigger and much softer than normal baby towels. It's worn like an apron, leaving two hands free during bath time. When the fun is done, baby can be safely lifted into a soft, warm embrace.

Score: 83.8%

What the testers said: "The towel was very absorbent and soft and snuggly for the baby."



My World - I Love Music

Overall winner

Publisher: Out of the Ark Music

Tel: 02084 817 200

Web: www.outoftheark.com

Price: Book & Audio CD £19.95, Book, Audio CD and Words on Screen Esongbook £34.95

Age range: 4-8 years

Description: We've made it easy! Here are 13 songs that provide everything required to deliver a music session with confidence. Explore dynamics and tempo, major and minor and build different layers of rhythms using song lyrics and melodies to help teach the concepts. Full of facts, and practical music-making ideas for each song.

Score: 72.6%

What the testers said: "This resource transformed our music making, enabling the whole staff team to get involved in music making with the children. Music sessions are now enjoyed by everyone, boosting well-being, inclusion and learning across all areas of the EYFS."



Music and Multimedia

Reading Explorers

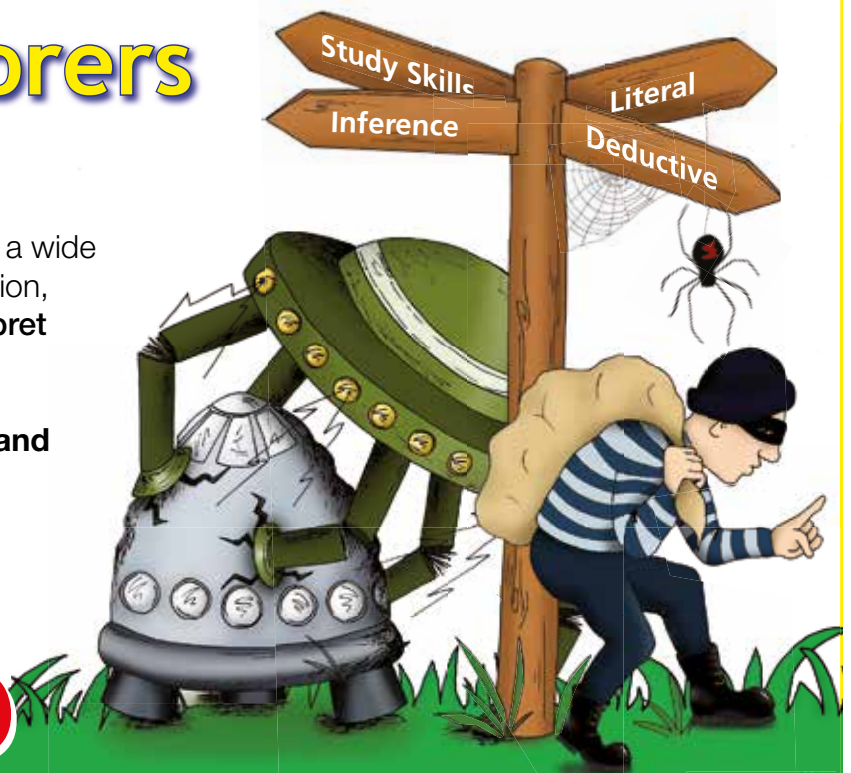
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Kidi Super Star Move

Overall winner

Manufacturer: VTech Electronics**Tel:** 01235 555 545**Web:** www.vtech.co.uk**Price:** £29.99**Age range:** 6 years +

Description: Reduce the vocal track of your favourite songs using Music Magic mode. Record for up to 2 minutes. Play 4 great games. Sing-along to 4 built-in songs. Features a colour changing mood light and voice changing effects. Add applause with instant sound effect buttons. Cable included for external music player connection.

Score: 93.5%

What the testers said: "Instantly appealing and popular with its colourful lights and screens. It comes with batteries included so it's ready to go from the start. The voice changer was lots of fun, as were the sound effect buttons. Good for ICT, literacy and self-confidence. It was great for singing along to your favourite songs and recording what you had sung."

"This was immediately appealing to children before it was even taken out of the packaging! They were able to explore it independently and quickly found the options they wanted to use. It's great for promoting communication and language skills."



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Mathseeds

Publisher: Blake eLearning**Tel:** 01173 600 248**Web:** www.mathseeds.co.uk**Price:** £29.95 for 12 month subscription**Age range:** 3-9 years

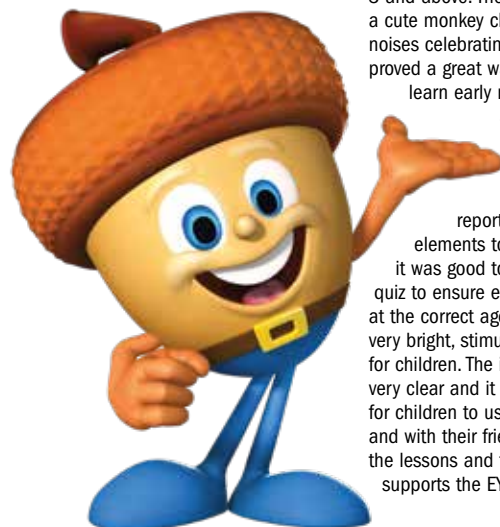
Description: Mathseeds uses fun, interactive lessons to teach 3-9 year-olds the core maths and problem solving skills they need to be successful at school.

Mathseeds combines highly structured lessons with fun motivational elements that keep children engaged and keen to learn.

Score: 90.4%

What the testers said: "A well illustrated tool for learning from age 3 and above. The user is guided by a cute monkey character, with cool noises celebrating success. This proved a great way for children to learn early number skills"

"As a practitioner and parent, it was really useful to receive a progress report and advice on elements to re-visit. In addition, it was good to have an initial quiz to ensure each child started at the correct age. The format was very bright, stimulating and engaging for children. The instructions were very clear and it didn't take long for children to use it independently and with their friends. They enjoyed the lessons and the games. It really supports the EYFS curriculum."



100 First Animals

Overall winner

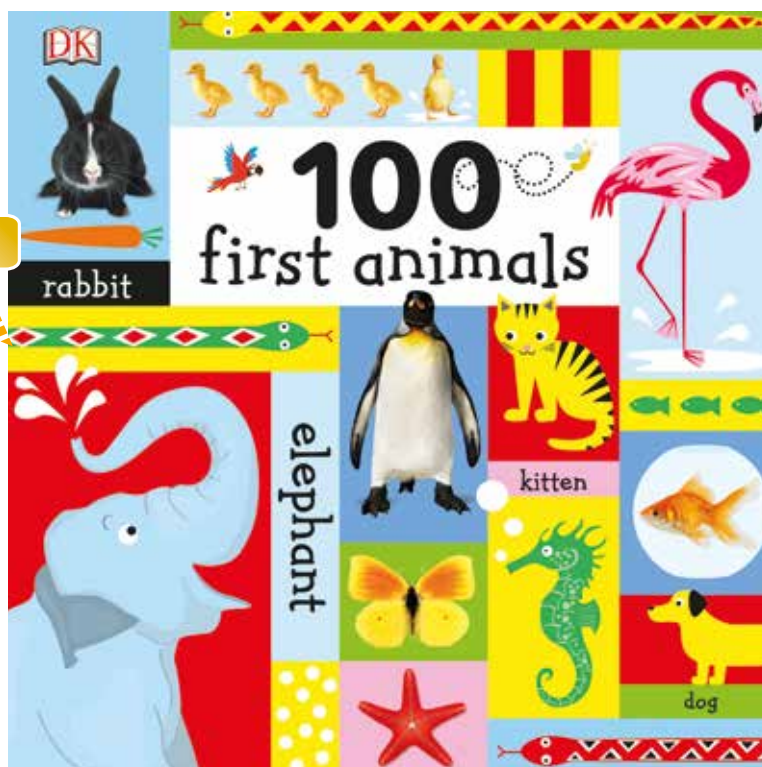
Publisher: DK**Tel:** 02071 392 841**Web:** www.dk.com/uk**Price:** £7.99**Age range:** 0-5 years

Description: Help little ones learn vocabulary with this beautiful, fun, picture-packed book, offering a great introduction to animals. Part of the series which launched with the award-winning 100 First Words, this is a high quality, cased board book designed to be toddler-friendly. It features crystal clear photographs and engaging illustrations, telling stories that encourage learning.

Score: 87.5%

What the testers said: "My son loved this book from the moment he first saw it. He loves animals and is doing well at saying what the animal is after reading it. The bright colours make the book appealing to young children."

"Brilliant, the children loved it. Bright pictures, very colourful and appealing. The pictures were big (some 2D, some 3D) and easy to share with a group. Portable and hardwearing – very suitable for a nursery and a great price. Would definitely recommend."



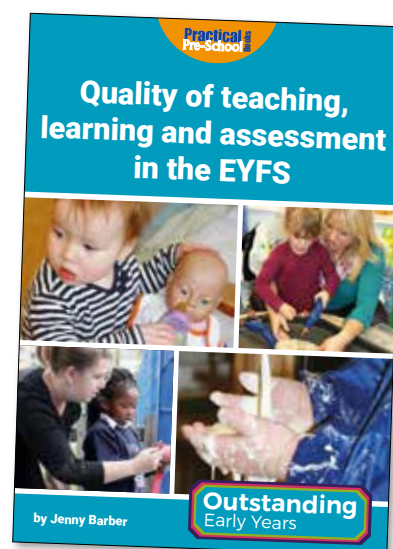
What does quality of teaching look like?

'Quality of Teaching' is one of the four key judgments under the new Common Inspection Framework.

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**Practical
Pre-School
Books**

The Beat Baby Handbook

Publisher: Lawrence Educational

Tel: 01223 328 051

Web: www.lawrenceeducational.co.uk

Price: £20

Age range: 2 years +

Description: Based on the work of Ros Bayley, this book and CD features 45 brand new raps and songs that children will absolutely love! It makes full use of rhythm and rhyme to help children develop key skills for emotional growth and resilience, as well as language development and phonological awareness.

Score: 87.0%

What the testers said: "A great resource for both parents and professionals."



Adventures Outdoors: Mud, Wind & Puddles

Publisher: Yellow Door

Tel: 01223 328 051

Web: www.yellow-door.net

Price: £30 (+vat)

Age range: 3 years +

Description: These cleverly designed card packs are ideal for portable inspiration for outdoor learning. They provide activity ideas for adventures with mud, wind and puddles which build on the natural curiosity of children. Practical and robust, each pack includes 30 stimulating ideas printed on durable plastic with engaging photographs.

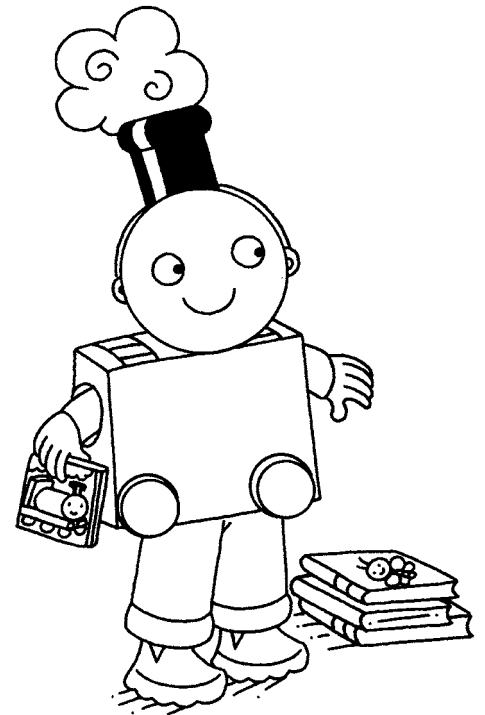
Score: 85.8%

What the testers said: "Great visual product and its main advantage is its simplicity. We loved the design and the pictures are great, and found that it really helped to make our outdoor planning child-led."



Bronze Awards

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yellow-door.net

Peppa Pig My First Look & Find Floor Puzzle 16pc

Overall winner

Manufacturer: Ravensburger

Tel: 01604 588 111

Web: www.Ravensburger.org

Price: £8.99

Age range: 2 years +

Description: Peppa Pig & friends are looking around Mr Fox's shop to see what they can buy. Look to see if you can find the named characters and items. How many items can you find? Developed and designed especially for toddlers, this fun-to-learn jigsaw puzzle is made from super-thick double laminated card.

Score: 100.0%

What the testers said: "Peppa Pig always appeals to children. This puzzle is bright and colourful, offering a chance to discuss what can be found. Puzzle pieces are a good size and the picture is very attractive. It would make a lovely birthday gift."

"All the children were very excited when this arrived, recognising the characters and enjoying the added extra of finding items within the puzzle picture. There was a lot to discuss and some great vocabulary ideas. The concept was clear to even the youngest children who were able to link the pictures independently. A great resource!"



Bright Basics™ Shape-sorting Popper

Manufacturer: Learning Resources®

Tel: 01553 818 063

Web: www.learningresources.co.uk

Price: £22.00

Age range: 2-4 years

Description: Shape matching mania! Toddlers can sort forest friends into their beds by matching the shapes on their bottoms with shapes on their bed bases - then press a button to make them pop! This colourful toy explores shapes, develops early maths skills through sorting and matching, and practises fine motor skills.

Score: 87.4%

What the testers said: "Good for teaching shapes and good for fine motor skills. Children loved the little animals and putting them in the bed. There was lots of laughter and excitement."

"Great game encouraging shape recognition for 2-3 year olds."



Bronze Awards

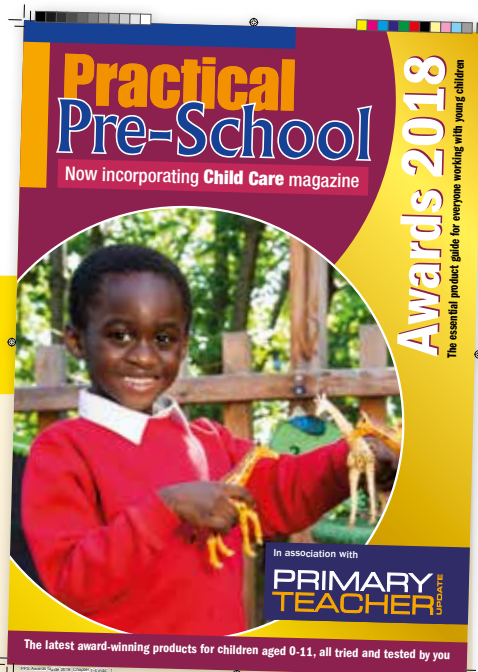
Thomas & Friends Train Race Game
Ravensburger



Awards 2019

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Classic World Learning Walker

Distributor: Hippychick

Tel: 01278 434440

Web: www.hippychick.com

Price: £49.99

Age range: Suitable from 12 months

Description: This learning walker has a sturdy base and a unique design that makes standing and pushing a breeze. Includes sorting blocks, a simple puzzle, a xylophone, a clock and cogs. It's perfect for children aged 12 months and above, to help development and build confidence.

Score: 90.0%



What the testers said: "A very well-made walker which is stable for children who are already quite confident on their feet. The front provides lots of manipulative fun and we liked the fact it is without gadgets. The shape sorter at the side is appealing and we found the tray became the favourite place for children to put special toys and transport them around the room."

A very attractive product which is durable. I have 4 boys who tested it to the limits!"

Overall winner



Crayola Dough

Distributor: Bandai UK

Tel: 01327 227 010

Web: www.bandai.co.uk

Price: from £0.50

Age range: 2 years +

Description: With Bandai's Crayola Dough collection you can be sure of safe and high-quality dough in the brightest of colours. Made from the finest Japanese flour and in non PVC packaging, not only do they look like the crayons but the colours are true to their fully patented Crayola pantones.

Score: 83.8%

What the testers said: "A pleasant smelling dough that is great for little hands and imaginations. It has a great feel and smell and can be moulded into shapes that are very relevant for children such as birthday cakes and food. A vibrant selection of dough colours are available."

"Children were very excited to use this product and the packaging was bright and eye-catching."



Dessineo 'Learn to Paint by Stencils' Animals

Manufacturer: Jumbo Games

Tel: +44 1707 289 204

Web: www.jumbo.eu

Price: £9.99

Age range: 4 years +

Description: This is perfect for encouraging children's creativity and desire to paint. They can experiment by using specially designed stencils to build a painting in three easy steps. There are templates for an elephant, a crab, a whale and an octopus.

Score: 82.9%

What the testers said: "We loved this! The colours are bright and the paint washed off really well; it's definitely the most washable paint I've come across. This product is also great for number recognition and I personally liked the fact the paint tubes had a number on. Overall, an amazing resource to encourage creativity. It is recommended for ages 4 and above, but younger children could certainly use it as well."



Bronze Awards

Dessineo 'Learn to Paint by Numbers' Farm Animals
Jumbo Games

Playfoam® Glow-In-The-Dark Learning Resources



Waterproof PU Set

Overall winner

Supplier: Muddy Puddles

Tel: 01299 407 150

Web: www.muddypuddles.com

Price: £38.95

Age range: 2-12 years

Description: Our waterproof set is ideal for outdoor learning. Designed with careful attention to detail, it features waterproof, breathable fabric, a yank proof zip, secure hood and elasticated waist on the trouser. Our set provides room for extra layers. Made to last with the promise of a 1-year quality guarantee.

Score: 95.8%

What the testers said: "These waterproofs are so soft and cosy and they were immediately loved by the children. I was very impressed."

"They are very high quality and I would imagine they would last for years. They would be an excellent addition to nurseries and schools for outdoor play and learning. By ensuring that the child stays dry in all weathers, it opens up outdoor play to all seasons, not just in the sunshine."



Tonka Steel Range

Distributor: Funrise International

Tel: 01327 227 010

Web: www.funrise.com

Price: From £19.99 - £44.99

Age range: 3 years +

Description: The Tonka Steel collection is a range of super tough vehicles that are ideal for younger kids. The Steel collection is a great way for children to enter a whole world of sandpit play with the rough and tough vehicles that are made from real steel.

Score: 91.4%

What the testers said: "The Tonka Steel Range offers durable toys for boys and girls, which help children learn more about them. I especially liked watching the children interact, using the toys to convey stories and discover new ways of expressing ideas."

These products were really enjoyed by all our children. They were used both indoors and outdoors, where the children used them for transporting materials such as stones, mud and sand. Very robust as they survived all the knocks and bangs!"



GeoSafari® Jr. Explorer Scope

Manufacturer: Learning Resources®

Tel: 01553 818 063

Web: www.learningresources.co.uk

Price: £15.00

Age range: 3-6 years

Description: This Explorer Scope will encourage little ones to get outside and explore the world around them.

The 2-in-1 Explorer Scope combines both microscope and telescope, and is ideal for an exploration activity such as a nature walk. Featuring soft rubber hand grips, a breakaway neck strap and perfect-fit goggles.

Score: 86.9%

What the testers said: "The children who played with this really enjoyed it. We liked the colours and the viewing range was good. A lovely educational product."

"The children loved using it and it has come everywhere with us! Such a great way to introduce this kind of science to children."



Botley™ the Coding Robot Activity Set

Overall winner

Manufacturer: Learning Resources®**Tel:** 01553 818 063**Web:** www.learningresources.co.uk**Price:** £79.00**Age range:** From 5 years

Description: Botley™ is designed to teach hands-on STEM skills to children as young as 5, providing exposure to fundamental coding concepts in a fun way that supports learning. Botley is 100-percent screen free and does not require the use of a smartphone or tablet.

Score: 95.4%

What the testers said: "An excellent product that introduces children to the concept of coding. The younger ones were happy to program in basic commands while the older children tried the more complex sequence of coding. Botley is very durable and easily withstood a boisterous playtime. The extra accessories are brilliant at bringing Botley to life and the older children enjoyed finding the hidden features. Overall a brilliant STEM product and resource that can be used to promote ICT with early years children."

"We loved Botley! The appeal was instant. Children were able to follow the written instructions and had him working straightaway. Ninety minutes later they were still engrossed. They were able to program



him and create obstacles with the shapes provided and not a cross word between them! It is rare to find a toy with instant appeal that requires no input from the adult. This clearly supports STEM, with children using their imaginations to create what might be possible. It is a great introduction to computer programming to younger children. The colours were equally appealing to both boys and girls. I liked the detailing on him – his tyre treads being computer circuitry. The control panel was a good size for small hands."



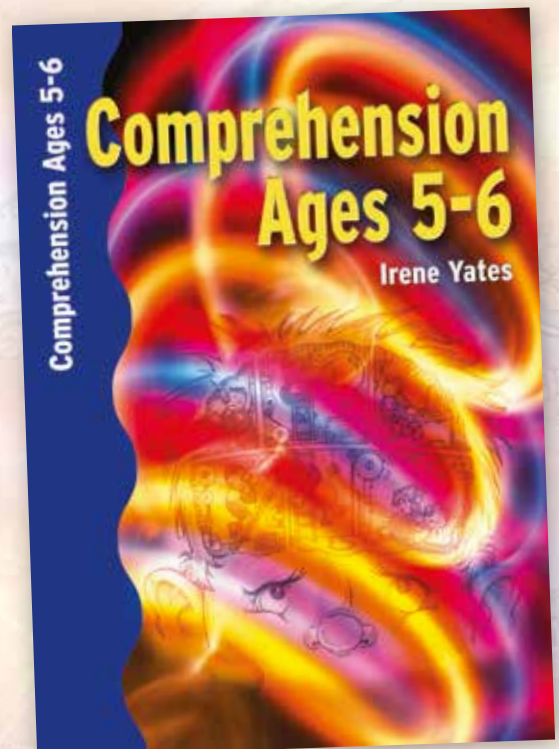
Comprehension

This brilliant resource aims to develop children's inferential skills, encouraging them to 'read between the lines' and then use this information constructively for a particular purpose.

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Balance Beans

Manufacturer: ThinkFun
Tel: 01604 588 111
Web: www.Amazon.co.uk
Price: £18.99
Age range: 5 years +

Description: With the Balance Beans logic game you'll certainly be entertained trying to keep your Beans balanced! Placing the colourful Beans on the seesaw to keep it from



teetering is great fun but this game also enhances logic skills. When you finally balance the seesaw you're actually balancing an equation too!

Score: 94.6%

What the testers said: "The children couldn't wait to get stuck in and it sustained their attention for a good period of time. It was a great, child-focused activity."



"This product is a favourite! It's simple to use and promotes counting and matching skills. Children challenge one another as they use the cards to balance the beans. They have also been working collaboratively to make their own balance patterns."



Bananagrams

Distributor: Asmodee UK
Tel: 01420 593 593
Web: www.asmodee.co.uk
Price: £15.99
Age range: 7 years +

Description: Fast and frantic, players race against each other to build crossword grids. It requires no pencil, paper, or board. In this addictive word game, speed wins, not points. You'll have a bunch of fun as you race to the finish by using all of your letter tiles first!

Score: 93.0%

What the testers said: "This product was easy to use and store away. The instructions were understood clearly. It kept children amused and engaged for quite some time. Better than scrabble as the children could play the game all at the same time."



Rush Hour

Manufacturer: ThinkFun
Tel: 01604 588 111
Web: www.Amazon.co.uk
Price: £19.99
Age range: 8 years +

Description: The classic traffic jam logic game. Escape: That's your goal. Rush Hour is the premier sliding block game which challenges beginners and experts alike.

Score: 89.2%

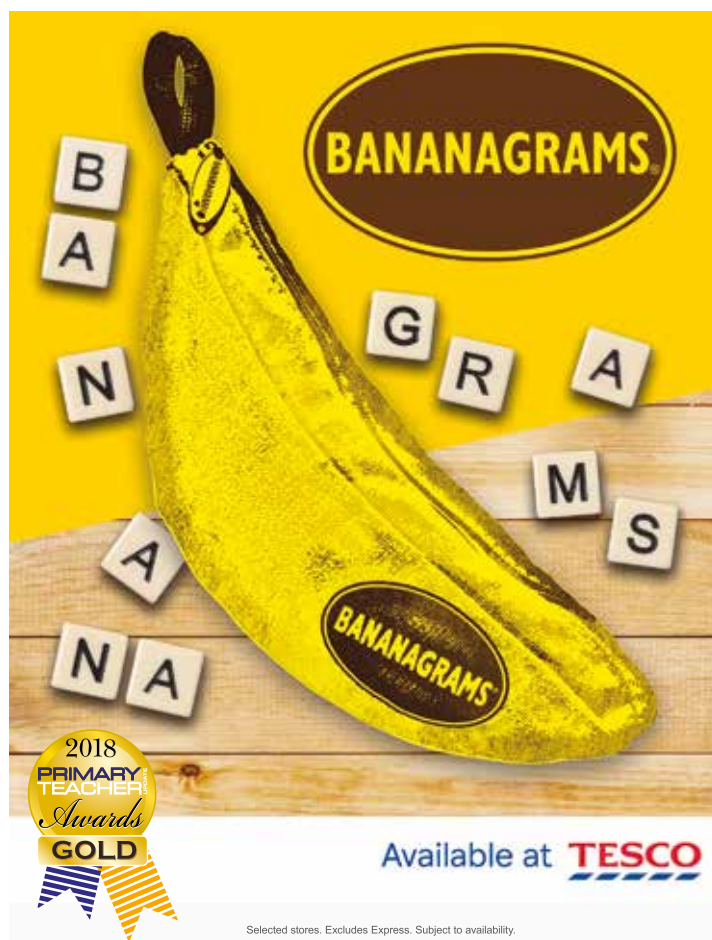
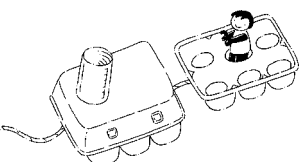
What the testers said: "First of all, this is a very addictive and simple game. The older children played for hours trying different challenges. It encourages children to work out different ways to unblock the cars and trucks and all the time they are playing they are learning problem solving skills. This



game also comes with a handy bag so it is easy to take on journeys away from home, with no small pieces to lose. This is a fantastic game and very good value for money. There is also an app of the game which has gone down very well within the setting."

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Overall winner

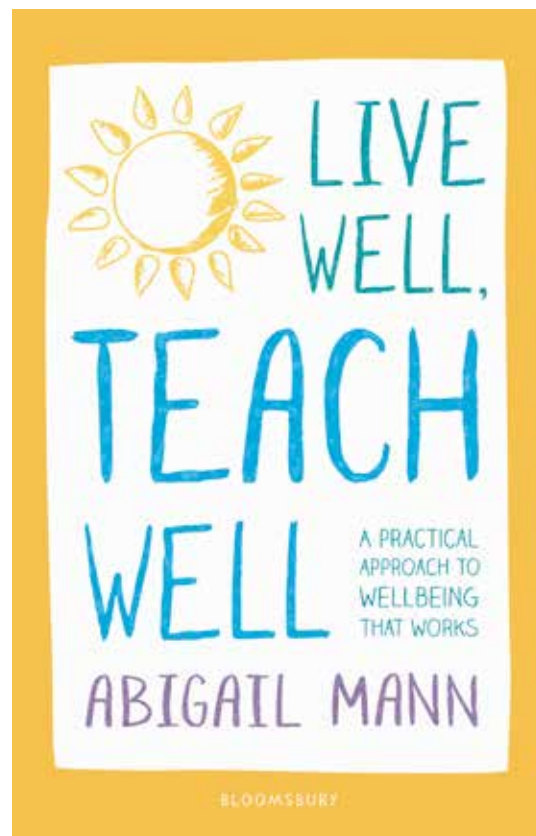
Publisher: Bloomsbury Education**Tel:** 02076 315 788**Web:** www.bloomsbury.com/uk/education**Price:** £16.99**Age range:** For teachers

Description: Stressed? Overworked? Drowning in marking? This book has it covered. In order to secure the best possible outcomes for their pupils, teachers must look after their own well-being, and Live Well, Teach Well is jam-packed with 90 practical ideas and strategies to help them do just that.

Score: 83.3%

What the testers said: "Lots of great ideas to promote positivity within pupils and staff."

"A fantastic book for ambitious teachers. It's packed full of innovative ideas. I think it would be a great buy for every school as a teacher resource. It has personal well-being firmly at the heart of the book, which obviously majorly impacts the children. Any school teacher who uses the resources would definitely help improve the outcomes for the children within their school. I loved the idea of well-being bags in the staffroom – they are easy to create and can be inexpensive. Recognition can boost morale and encourage team work. Great ideas to boost positivity and reduce any negativity. I totally believe in the statement: "positivity is contagious". Easy to dip in and out of. I really love this book!"



Igniting Children's Writing

Publisher: Bloomsbury Education**Tel:** 02076 315 788**Web:** www.bloomsbury.com/uk/education**Price:** £19.99**Age range:** 7-14 years

Description: From Snakes and Ladders to Countdown Conundrums, this book provides 50 fun, effective and easily adaptable activities for improving pupil reading, writing, thinking, spelling and talking skills. Ideal for Reading and SATS preparation, this is the perfect resource for any teacher looking to develop pupils' cross-curricular literacy skills.

Score: 81.0%

What the testers said: "An excellent book full of information to ignite children's writing. Lots of great ideas for teachers to bring to the classroom, and the book would also work for parents. There are 50

activities within the book which can assist SATS preparation. As a book to dip in and out of, the games and activities are aimed at assisting children to gain confidence in literacy skills."



Bronze Awards

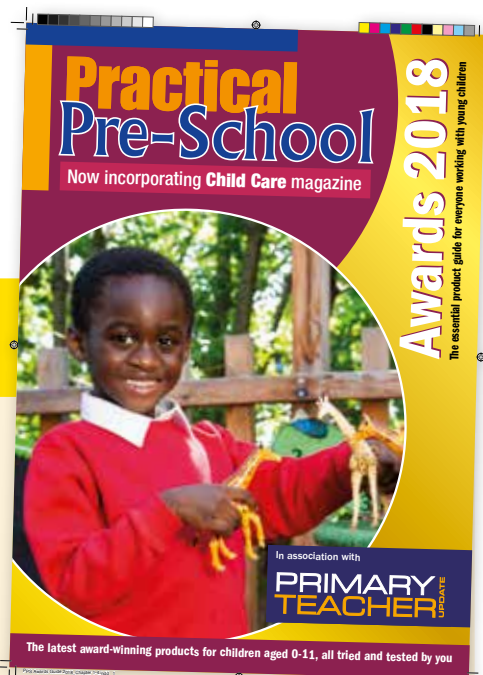
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Playfoam® Pals™

Overall winner

Manufacturer: Learning Resources®**Tel:** 01553 818 063**Web:** www.learningresources.co.uk**Price:** £6.00 (for two pack)**Age range:** 5-10 years

Description: Playfoam® Pals™ feature collectible pods that open to reveal a unique animal character encased in Playfoam®! The super-squishy, sculpting material is child friendly, won't dry out and doesn't stick to clothes or carpet. Perfect for indoor creative play! Children love opening the Playfoam Pals pods to reveal their surprise collectible!

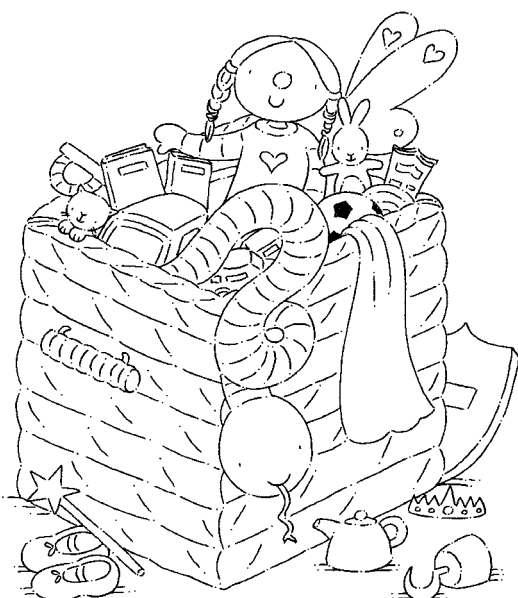
Score: 78.1%**What the testers**

said: "The children were eager to open this and were excited to see what playfoam pals were inside."



Bronze Awards

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Jolly Music Player

Joint overall winner

Publisher: Jolly Learning Ltd**Tel:** 02085 010 405**Web:** www.jollylearning.co.uk**Price:** £30.00 (each level)**Age range:** 4-10 years

Description: The Jolly Music Player contains the entire Jolly Music repertoire for each learning level and can be used on an interactive whiteboard or overhead projector/screen. Highlights include using lesson or custom playlists, printing a variety of complementary resources and low cost (with no additional subscription fees).

Score: 92.5%

What the testers said: "The Jolly range is completely new to us and we were delighted to discover it. The activities were simple but fun. It's great that there are other resources to complement the it."



Wildlife Garden Songs

Joint overall winner

Supplier: Melody Treehouse**Tel:** 07523 718 248**Web:** www.fundels.com**Price:** £9.99**Age range:** 3-7 years

Description: Wildlife Garden Songs is a collection of 15 tracks designed to help teach children about wildlife gardening. Within the framework of learning about this natural environment, the songs can also help to teach other concepts such as counting, positional words, bending knees while jumping and landing, and friendship and cooperation.

Score: 92.5%

What the testers said: "These CDs were great fun and the children enjoyed listening to the songs over and over again. As a practitioner, it is refreshing to have new songs to sing at story time and parts to act out when involving children in the fun. This was especially good for outdoor listening. Our favourite product so far!"

"Our pre-school really enjoyed these songs. Very suitable for 3 to 4 year olds and may also be incorporated into the older classes. The songs were easy to learn and the children were soon familiar with them."



S!ng Sensational**Publisher:** Out of the Ark Music**Tel:** 02084 817 200**Web:** www.outoftheark.com**Price:** Book & Audio CD £24.95,
Book, Audio CD and Words on
Screen CD ROM (with online
eSongbook) £42.95**Age range:** Ages 5-11 years

Description: Sing Sensational is a collection of 19 flamboyant songs and warm-ups just right for an extravagant, energetic and exciting show-stopper of a performance! It contains everything you need to inspire your choir, put on a fabulous concert or end of year assembly.

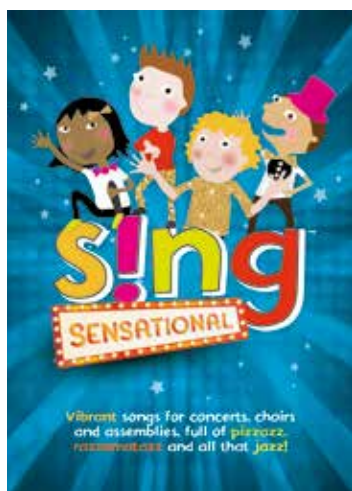
Score: 92%

What the testers said: "A great selection of songs for children to enjoy. The audio CD and vocal tracks make the songs easier to learn, while creating an opportunity for

children to sing along."

"This is an excellent product. There's lots of extra information as well as 19 songs.

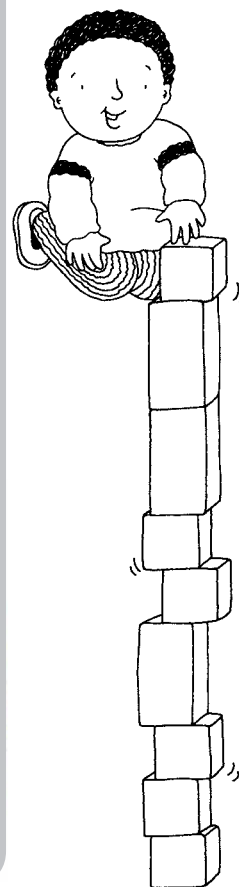
The teacher's book comes with warm-up exercises. There is an excellent quick-glance guide with all the essential information, enabling you to choose an appropriate song for the occasion. The big added bonus is the words on the screen pack work with a whiteboard, computer, or TV. This enables an interactive experience, while the lyrics synchronise with the music. This supports the learning process and makes the teacher's job easier. An excellent pack that will be well used!"

**Giant Magnetic Water Cycle****Manufacturer:** Learning Resources®**Tel:** 01553 818 063**Web:** www.learningresources.co.uk**Price:** £17.00**Age range:** 5-9 years

Description: These jumbo magnets bring the six stages of the water cycle to life and demonstrates the journey that water takes as it moves from land, to sky, and back again!

Score: 87.5%

What the testers said: "It made explaining the weather cycle easy and we liked the fact that we were able to tell children the correct words for the process. Children generally like 'big' words."



MELODY TREEHOUSE SUPPLY FUN, CATCHY, EDUCATIONAL SONGS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AGED 3 TO 7. OUR SONGS AND FREE RESOURCES ARE A VALUABLE ASSET TO TEACHERS.

In 2011 Practical Pre-School Awards honoured Melody Treehouse with a bronze award for our album "Happy Healthy Songs". The good news, is we are about to receive another award for "Wildlife Garden Songs": 15 songs written and designed to teach children about the natural environment.

Please drop in and visit us at
www.melodytreehouse.com



Sand and water fine motor tool set

Overall winner

Manufacturer: Learning Resources®

Tel: 01553 818 063

Web: www.learningresources.co.uk

Price: £13.00

Age range: 3-7 years

Description: Helps kids develop their fine motor skills through fun water play – either in the bath, or on the beach!

The set of four toddler-sized tools includes a squeeze bottle, spinner, wavy dropper, and scoop, each of which demonstrates a different physical concept through fun, easy-to-understand interactive play.

Score: 74.2%

What the testers said: “This fine motor skill tool set has been used nearly every day. It’s great for developing fine motor skills and is very versatile. It supports children to describe themselves in positive terms and talk about their abilities, while helping them to make connections between their movements and the marks they make.”

“This is really good for fine motor skills, allowing children to strengthen their hand muscles, while water beads help improve scissor skills.”

Overall Winner
2018
PRIMARY
TEACHER
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Awards 2019

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Would you like to be recognised for the concept behind, and quality of, the products in your early years, childcare and primary education ranges? If the answer is 'yes' and you feel that you have a deserving gold award winner on your hands, why not consider entering the 2019 Awards?

The *Practical Pre-School Awards Scheme*, in association with *Primary Teacher Update*, considers equipment aimed at early years, childcare and key stage 1 and 2 settings, for both their play and educational values. Products are also judged on other factors such as durability and ease of use.

Our dedicated panel of testers includes childminders, nurseries, playgroups, pre-schools and primary schools, and let's not forget the children themselves. It is these high standards, and thorough evaluations, that result in awards for educational products of the utmost quality.

Results will be announced at the annual awards ceremony in September 2019 and published in a full-colour awards supplement, which is distributed free with *Practical Pre-School* magazine. It can also be accessed online at www.practicalpreschoolawards.co.uk

One of the largest in the country, our Awards Scheme encompasses products from a far-reaching and varied group of suppliers both nationally and internationally. The categories reflect all things related to childcare, the early years and primary education, including Toys and Games, Books and Publications, Teacher Resources, Childcare, Electronic Toys

and Apps, Music and Multimedia, Creative Play, Outdoor Toys and Equipment, Classic Toys and Games and Days Out and Attractions.

The target audience of the annual awards is ever-increasing and we are expecting a large volume of entries, so there's no time like the present: start thinking about your 2019 entries now!

If you would like further information on how to enter next year's *Practical Pre-School Awards* in association with *Primary Teacher Update*, simply email the following email address:

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