



Skills Builder

PARTNERSHIP

skillsbuilder.org

Toolkit: Primary Schools

Autumn 2018
UK Edition

The Framework and Principles for
building essential skills



The Skills Builder Partnership provides the Framework and Principles for building essential skills.

500⁺
schools and
organisations



200,000⁺
children and
young people



10,000⁺
teachers and
professionals



Our partnership of educators, employers and skills-building organisations is ensuring every child and young person builds these skills.

Join us.

In this toolkit for primary schools

- 1. Introduction** How Skills Builder supports children's broader learning
- 2. Where it's come from** Giving us a shared language and age-appropriate expectations around essential skills
- 3. The Principles** The six principles for building these skills into school life
- 4. The Framework** Breaking the eight skills down into teachable nuggets for children of all ages
- 5. Use it** Practical tools and resources to use the Framework in your school
- 6. Case studies** How over 350 schools are already using the Framework
- 7. Appendix** The detail of who's been involved, and the research it's built on



Introduction

The changing world makes it more important than ever to invest in building a set of essential skills in our children and young people: the ability to creatively solve problems, to manage themselves, to communicate effectively, or to work well with others.

While frequently called for by employers and universities, really these skills are about giving our children the resources to thrive in their childhood, as much as the rest of their lives. Increasingly, too, teachers are adamant that their students need these skills – 97% responded to a Sutton Trust survey that these skills were at least as important as academic achievements for their children and young people ².

What holds us back

Our work at Enabling Enterprise has shown us that it is perfectly possible for every child to build a high level of competency in these skills. But to do so requires these skills to be taught explicitly – we cannot presume that they are innate or that they are

just ‘rub off’ on students after enough opportunities or experiences. In our work, we have found that the fundamental shift in mind set must be towards thinking about these essential skills with just the same rigour as two skills we feel very comfortable about teaching: literacy and numeracy.

Six principles

Across almost a decade’s work with 3- to 18-year-olds, we’ve seen six principles underpin the approach of schools and organisations who are highly successful in building these skills for every child and person. These principles have been stress-tested through work with education consultancy LKMco ³ and consolidated into a book published in 2017, *The Missing Piece: The Essential Skills that Education Forgot* ⁴. They underpin what effective essential skills building looks like. Here we include benchmarks to help schools and other organisations see how their work links to these, where it is strongest and where it could be strengthened.

A shared Framework

To collectively achieve these principles, though, we need a big leap forward: as with literacy and numeracy, we need a shared language and common expectations of what we really mean by the essential skills, how they break down, and the logical order in which to develop them. While the Skills Builder Framework started from Enabling Enterprise’s experience, it has become much more than that. It has been used by a diverse range of organisations. It has benefited from expert input. It is being led and shared by a fantastic advisory group.

It has never been so important to build the essential skills. Skills Builder and the partnership behind it is a unique chance to transform how we do so together.

Tom Ravenscroft

Founder & CEO,
The Skills Builder Partnership

Other organisations using Skills Builder

We're building a global coalition of skills-building youth organisations, all using the shared Skills Builder Framework. As these skills are widely transferable, our partner organisations cover a whole range of different industries and outcomes.

480+ schools

130+ employers



30+ skills-building organisations

TeachFirst



The missing piece

There is something fundamental missing in education. Knowledge and good grades are not enough.

Skills Builder has grown from the work of the Enabling Enterprise partnership. Unless children and young people are also building the essential skills for success then they will struggle to achieve their potential.

We see it in schools, where students sometimes struggle to articulate their ideas, work with others, solve problems or organise themselves to achieve their goals ².

We see it in universities, where academics fear their undergraduates struggle without the structures and support offered by schools. One in twelve freshers from a low-income background drops out ⁵.

We see it in businesses and startups, where employers consistently report that they prioritise the employability skills of school and college leavers - but then 50% report that they cannot recruit young people with these skills ¹.

In every case, students need to be skilled in communication, creative problem solving, self-management and collaboration. The language around this is diverse and confusing: are they 'employability', 'enterprise', 'entrepreneurship', 'transferable' or 'soft' skills? We simply call them **essential skills**, because that is what they are.



At school,
students often find it
difficult to:

articulate ideas
solve problems
organise to
achieve goals

work with others



At university,
young people struggle
without structure.

1 in 12
from a low-income
background drops out ⁶.



In employment,
employability skills are
prioritised, but

50%
say these skills
are lacking in their
applicants ¹.

There is a lot of great work going on out there. But sometimes it doesn't add up to the sum of its parts. Despite our efforts, all too often parents, schools, students, employers and other skills-building organisations are all using a different language. We don't have a shared sense of what order we might approach building these skills, nor do we have a common understanding of what we might expect from students of different ages.

The Skills Builder Framework and principles allow for a shared approach to building these skills for every child and young person, in many different settings.

Building essential skills

Our starting point is eight essential skills. Known by many different names, these eight skills map across to the four domains that come up time and again as essential whether in the context of education, employment or entrepreneurship ⁴.

In pairs they cover communication, creative problem-solving, self-management, and collaboration skills. These eight skills are explained in the [Skills Builder Framework](#).



Skills Builder FRAMEWORK

The Framework breaks down each of the eight essential skills into fifteen tangible, teachable and measurable steps. We can use it with children, young people and ourselves to clarify what success looks like in each skill and to map out the trajectory for proficiency. The full Framework can be found from page 11.

The Framework is a culmination of four years of learning and builds on the expertise of over 60 leading organisations and individuals across the sector. It has been piloted with over twenty skills-building organisations. It has also been independently reviewed twice and used by over 10,000 teachers with over 200,000 children and young people to date.

See the complete Framework
from page 11

The Skills Builder Principles

We have learned a lot over the years about how best to build essential skills. We know that to have a real impact, the skills must be taught with consistency and focus, just like numeracy and literacy are. These principles hold true whatever the setting.



1. Keep it simple

A consistent focus on the essential skills helps ensure everyone's shared understanding and makes building these skills as tangible as possible. Using the same language all the time makes a big difference.

Things to consider:

Does everyone know which essential skills you build in your school?

Do all staff and students use consistent language when referring to the skills?

Do all staff receive training and support on teaching these skills?



2. Start young, keep going

Starting as young as possible allows more time for mastery. The skills are not just about employability, but about thriving in all aspects of life. We work with children as young as 3 years old.

Things to consider:

Do you think about these skills for all the students you work with?

Could you introduce these skills earlier on?

Are there opportunities for students to build the skills further as they grow?



3. Measure it

Take time to reflect on the skills of students – by observing or by self-assessment. This gives a balanced understanding of strengths and weaknesses, highlights progress and shows next steps.

Things to consider:

Are you using a consistent skills framework and assessment tool like Skills Builder?

Does your framework reflect quantifiable progress over time?

Do you use assessments at the beginning and end of a year?



4. Focus tightly

Building essential skills should build upon a student's previous learning and skill attainment. It should allow dedicated time just to explicitly build the skill.

Things to consider:

Do you have different goals for what different students should be aiming to do when building their skills?

Do you make time just to focus on explicitly teaching skills?



5. Keep practising

To accelerate progress in the essential skills, they should be used and reinforced as often as possible – whenever you have the chance with those students.

Things to consider:

Are there regular opportunities for students to use their essential skills?

When they do, are these opportunities highlighted clearly to them?

Is there regular opportunity to actively reflect on the skills and how they have been developed?



6. Bring it to life

Ensure students see the relevance of these skills by linking them with the real world and by bringing real-life problems and challenges to work on.

Things to consider:

Are the skills framed in terms of their usefulness for education, employment or entrepreneurship?

Are there opportunities for students to use their skills in different settings?

Do you use links to employers to support building these skills?



Skills Builder FRAMEWORK

Using the Framework

Where to start

As a school, think about where you feel your provision is currently strongest in building these skills. Are there skills which should be a particular priority?

The steps have been designed to chime with different ages. So, Step 1 is a good target for Year 1 (5-6 year-olds). Step 6 is a good target for Year 6 (10-11 year-olds), and the higher steps extend to secondary. This is only a very rough guide though, and the key thing is to start where your children need you to.

Mastery principles

A Mastery approach underpins the Framework – that means, no steps should be skipped and only when a step is mastered should students move onto the next one.

Mastery of a step is evident when a student is regularly able to demonstrate that step in different contexts.

How the Framework can be used



Assess young people

We have built an assessment tool from the Framework which can be used by a teacher or practitioner.

This support schools to work out which skill step students are currently at so that their programmes can be differentiated and focused.



Target your teaching and practice

Once you know where the students you're working with are in the essential skills you're working on then you can focus the activities towards the specific next skill steps. We have created a bank of skill-step specific video activities and other suggested activities at skillsbuilder.org/hub.



Embed a consistent skill language

The language of the specific steps from the Framework can be used:

- By all staff to praise students making skill progress
- To support staff to set specific skill objectives for activities and lessons
- To support students to set themselves clear targets for what they want to improve in the skills



Listening

The receiving, relating and processing of information or ideas.

The first five steps are about listening and responding to one person at a time.

Learners then move on to develop their listening in different contexts and use information or ideas they have heard in their own responses.

The next stage is focused on the analysis of why a speaker is engaging, being able to explain why they have made particular language or presentational choices.

From Step 11, learners are encouraged to engage critically with the content of what a speaker has said.

At the top end, learners are able to critically evaluate the success of a speaker across different contexts.

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3	Step	Learner Descriptor	4	Teacher Explanation	5
	Step 0	I can listen to others for a short time.		Learners listen with enjoyment and respond appropriately to stories.	
	Step 1	I can listen to adults, follow instructions and tell you what I heard.		Learners can listen to an adult, such as a teacher or teaching assistant, and recall and follow simple instructions.	
	Step 2	I can listen to others and ask questions about what I heard.		Learners are able to listen to others and ask relevant questions based on what they heard.	
	Step 3	I can follow a conversation and tell somebody else what it was about.		Learners are able to listen to multiple speakers, retain the information and give a basic account.	
	Step 4	I can explain that there are different purposes to speech and how to identify them.		Learners are able to explain why people communicate (e.g. to ask a question, give instructions, provide information or persuade) and identify some simple language features of each one.	
	Step 5	I can listen to extended talk and identify the key information I need.		Learners can listen to and respond to extended talk, identifying the key information they need and retain it.	
	Step 6	I can take part and respond in a group discussion.		Learners are able to follow and take part in a group discussion and express opinions when called upon.	
	Step 7	I can analyse how a speaker uses language and gesture to engage the audience.		Learners can analyse how a speaker engages an audience through language and gesture.	
	Step 8	I can analyse how a speaker adapts language for different purposes.		Learners can analyse how and why a speaker adapts their language to suit different purposes such as to persuade, entertain and instruct.	
	Step 9	I can analyse the tone, emphasis and status of the speaker and their effect.		Learners can recognise the tone, emphasis and status of a speaker and consider their effect.	
	Step 10	I can ask probing and relevant questions to check and build my understanding.		Learners are able to follow a speaker and make their own meaningful, probing questions to check and deepen their own understanding.	
	Step 11	I can identify and analyse different points of view of speakers.		Learners can identify and analyse different points of view they hear in a discussion and explain how they are different.	
	Step 12	I can identify underlying themes, implications and issues when listening.		Learners can identify themes, implications and issues in what is being said.	
	Step 13	I can analyse bias when listening, through a speaker's language, omission or ambiguity.		Learners can analyse bias through language, omission and ambiguity.	
	Step 14	I can explain a speaker's techniques and approaches in different contexts.		Learners understand a speaker's intentions and techniques and how they use a range of different approaches in different contexts.	
	Step 15	I can evaluate how a speaker can become an outstanding speaker.		Learners can evaluate a speaker's use of language, gesture, tone, emphasis, bias and the credibility and validity of their point of view to make suggestions for improvement.	

- 1 Skill definition
- 2 The thematic progression in skill development
- 3 The steps roughly link to year groups – so Step 2 is a good target for Year 2 (6-7 year-olds)
- 4 This descriptor can be shared with the children to understand their own skills
- 5 This is a more detailed explanation of what this skill step looks like

To find a much more detailed handbook of how to build each skill step as well as games, teaching activities, assessment tools and a lot more, [join the Skills Builder Partnership](#) – see page 19 for details.



Listening

The receiving, retaining and processing of information or ideas.

The first few steps are about **listening and responding to one person** at a time.

Learners then move on to develop their listening in different contexts and **use information or ideas** they have heard in their own responses.

The next stage is focused on the **analysis of why a speaker is engaging**, being able to explain why they have made particular language or presentational choices.

From Step 11, learners are encouraged to **engage critically with the content** of what a speaker has said.

At the top end, learners are able to **critically evaluate** the success of a speaker across different contexts.

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Step	Learner Descriptor	Teacher Explanation
Step 0	I can listen to others for a short time.	Learners listen with enjoyment and respond appropriately to stories.
Step 1	I can listen to adults, follow instructions and tell you what I heard.	Learners can listen to an adult, such as a teacher or teaching assistant, and recall and follow simple instructions.
Step 2	I can listen to others and ask questions about what I heard.	Learners are able to listen to others and ask relevant questions based on what they heard.
Step 3	I can follow a conversation and tell somebody else what it was about.	Learners are able to listen to multiple speakers, retain the information and give a basic account.
Step 4	I can explain that there are different purposes to speech and how to identify them.	Learners are aware that there are different reasons why people communicate (e.g. to ask a question, give instructions, provide information or persuade) and identify some simple language features of each one.
Step 5	I can listen to extended talk and identify the key information I need.	Learners can listen to and respond to extended talk, identifying the key information they need and retain it.
Step 6	I can take part and respond in a group discussion.	Learners are able to follow and take part in a group discussion and express opinions when called upon.
Step 7	I can analyse how a speaker uses language and gesture to engage the audience.	Learners can analyse how a speaker engages an audience through language and gesture.
Step 8	I can analyse how a speaker adapts language for different purposes.	Learners can analyse how and why a speaker adapts their language to suit different purposes such as to persuade, entertain and instruct.
Step 9	I can analyse the tone, emphasis and status of the speaker and their effect.	Learners can recognise the tone, emphasis and status of a speaker and consider their effect.
Step 10	I can ask probing and relevant questions to check and build my understanding.	Learners are able to follow a speaker and create their own meaningful, probing questions to check and deepen their own understanding.
Step 11	I can identify and analyse different points of views of speakers.	Learners can identify and analyse different points of views they hear in a discussion and explain how they are different.
Step 12	I can identify underlying themes, implications and issues when listening.	Learners can identify themes, implications and issues in what is being said.
Step 13	I can analyse bias when listening, through a speaker's language, omissions or ambiguity.	Learners can analyse bias through language, omission and ambiguity.
Step 14	I can explain a speaker's techniques and approaches in different contexts.	Learners understand a speaker's intentions and techniques and how they use a range of different approaches in different contexts.
Step 15	I can evaluate how a speaker can become an outstanding speaker.	Learners can evaluate a speaker's use of language, gesture, tone, emphasis, bias and the plausibility and validity of their point of view to make suggestions for improvement.



Presenting

The oral transmission of information or ideas.

The first few steps are about learners **speaking clearly and logically**, to communicate their ideas.

The next stage is about being able to make **appropriate language choices**, considering their audience and why they are presenting.

Once they have mastered this, learners move on to how to create **engaging presentations** by thinking about gesture, expression and tone.

From Step 9, learners focus on **adapting their presentations for their audience**.

The final steps support learners in developing their **own personal presentational style** and how to make this effective in different contexts.

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Step	Learner Descriptor	Teacher Explanation
Step 0	I can speak clearly to someone I know.	Learners can convey simple ideas of immediate interest to one other person.
Step 1	I can speak clearly to a small group of people I know.	Learners can convey simple answers or thoughts to a wider group, for example in a group discussion.
Step 2	I can speak clearly and explain my ideas to a group of people.	Learners can share a narrative or extended answer while speaking to a group.
Step 3	I make points in an order that makes sense when I am speaking.	Learners can explain ideas in a clear order with relevant detail, using conjunctions to structure their speech.
Step 4	I choose an order for my points so that the audience can best understand me.	Learners are able to logically order information in a way that could be understood by an audience. Learners begin to engage the audience with some presentational techniques.
Step 5	I can use formal language, tone and expression when I am presenting.	Learners are able to use standard English when presenting to a group, avoiding inappropriate language or slang.
Step 6	I can change my language depending on the purpose and audience.	Learners use appropriate language based on their understanding of the presentation's purpose and audience.
Step 7	I can structure my language in a way that makes my communication clear and engaging, and use examples for my points.	Learners use appropriate structure and vocabulary, and also bring in examples to illustrate their key points.
Step 8	I can vary my language and level of detail to make my presentation interesting according to the context.	Learners can vary the level of detail and the language they use when presenting to make it appropriate to the audience and their brief.
Step 9	I can adapt my language, structure and gesture to engage my audience.	Learners can use appropriate language, structure and gesture for the context they are presenting in.
Step 10	I am able to modify my language, tone and expression according to the listeners' reaction and response.	Learners are able to modify language, tone and expression according to the listeners' reaction and response to increase the audience's engagement.
Step 11	I can anticipate different responses from the audience and plan for them.	Learners are also able to anticipate different responses from the audience and are able to plan accordingly. For example, by varying the mood to elicit different emotional responses.
Step 12	I can be flexible in my style during the presentation to better engage the audience. This might include changes to content and style of delivery.	Learners can adapt their presentation during its delivery to better engage the audience.
Step 13	I explore different styles of presenting and consider their effectiveness.	Learners begin to develop a personal presenting style, adapting the content, structure, language and non-verbal features to the audience and purpose of the talk.
Step 14	I reflect on the effectiveness of different styles of presenting and choose the best style for me.	Learners can reflect and develop their personal presenting style and evaluate the effectiveness of their approach.
Step 15	I can deliver effective presentations in a personal style, adapted to the situation, and reflect on why they were effective.	Learners are able to creatively adapt the content, structure and style of presentation to the purpose, audience and tone of the talk with distinct personal style and flair.



Problem Solving

The ability to find a solution to a complex situation or challenge.

The initial stages are about learners being able to **explain a simple problem** they may have and recognise they may need help.

Once learners are able to identify problems, they begin learning how to use **strategies to solve simple problems**.

The next stage focuses on being able to **identify complex problems** and break them down before suggesting a range of possible solutions.

From Step 11, learners focus on **using different processes to solve complex problems**.

Finally, learners are able to **evaluate the approaches** they have developed to solve problems.

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Step	Learner Descriptor	Teacher Explanation
Step 0	I can follow instructions to solve a problem.	Learners can follow adult instructions to solve a problem.
Step 1	I can ask for help when I need it.	Learners can identify when they require adult support in overcoming difficulties and will seek a suitable adult for help with this.
Step 2	I can explain a simple problem that I might have and get someone to help me with it.	Learners can identify simple problems and ask for adult support to scaffold possible solutions.
Step 3	I can find extra information with help from others to help me solve a simple problem.	Learners can identify when they need extra information to solve a simple problem and can find that information with help from an adult or peers.
Step 4	I can come up with different ways to solve a simple problem.	Learners appreciate that there are frequently different ways to solve a problem and can explain different options in a given situation.
Step 5	I can use pros and cons to pick the best way of solving a simple problem.	Learners can articulate a problem and evaluate different potential solutions to choose the option they think will be most effective (with adult support).
Step 6	I can explain the difference between simple and complex problems.	Learners can identify complex problems (e.g. I can't decide on a secondary school) and explain how these differ from simple problems (e.g. what I need to pack for holiday). They can explain why different approaches might be needed.
Step 7	I can carry out research to better understand complex problems.	Learners can seek additional information to build their understanding of a complex problem.
Step 8	I can look at the causes and effects of complex problems, including carrying out research.	Learners can identify extra information they need in order to consider the causes and effects of a problem and seek out that information independently.
Step 9	I can create a range of possible solutions for complex problems and identify the pros and cons of each.	Learners can create a range of possible solutions, identifying the pros and cons of each approach.
Step 10	I can evaluate different solutions for a complex problem to pick the best one.	Learners can choose between the options that they've created and use some justifiable method to do so – such as scoring and weighting outcomes.
Step 11	I can use logic trees to help solve complex problems.	Learners can create simple logic trees to think through problems where there are different outcomes.
Step 12	I can use hypotheses to help solve complex problems.	Learners are able to generate hypotheses in answer to complex problems, and suggest how they could test these hypotheses.
Step 13	I can explain deductive and inductive logic and how they can be used in problem-solving.	Learners have a basic understanding of deductive and inductive logic and understand how these can be applied effectively to problems.
Step 14	I can identify assumptions that may be made about a problem and possible solutions, and think about how this might impact my approach.	Learners can explain what assumptions might have been made in the process of solving a problem and developing solutions, and consider how understanding these assumptions will affect the approach they take.
Step 15	I can evaluate the success of solutions I have used to attempt to solve a complex problem.	Learners can effectively evaluate different results from their attempted solutions to complex problems and adapt their approach if required.



Creativity

The use of imagination and the generation of new ideas.

The first stage is about learners **recognising and using their imagination** to express themselves.

The next few steps focus on the learner's confidence to use their imagination to **develop new ideas using guidance or existing ideas**.

From Step 6, learners are able to **explain how creativity is useful** to help in different areas of life.

The next stage is about learners using **different strategies for creativity**, both when working alone and in groups.

Finally, learners are able to **evaluate different strategies for creativity** and reflect on what works well for them.

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Step	Learner Descriptor	Teacher Explanation
Step 0	I can use my imagination in role-play.	Learners feel comfortable with the idea of using their imagination. They might do this in the context of familiar, real-world settings.
Step 1	I can talk about when I use my imagination.	Learners can talk about using imagination and when they use their imagination.
Step 2	I can share what I imagine through writing, drawing or acting it out.	Learners can express and share what they are imagining through writing, drawing or other forms of expression.
Step 3	I can use my imagination to come up with ideas when I've been given success criteria to help me.	Learners can produce ideas when they are given a simple brief, some success criteria or broad guidelines as support.
Step 4	I can use my imagination to come up with ideas linked to a starting point.	Learners can generate multiple ideas when they are given a stimulus or initial idea as a starting point.
Step 5	I can combine ideas or concepts to create new ones.	Learners can merge simple ideas to create new ones and can identify that ideas have different components.
Step 6	I can explain what creativity is and how it is used in different settings.	Learners can explain what creativity is, how it might be seen in different settings (the arts, design or day-to-day situations) and how it is used by different groups of people.
Step 7	I can explain how I use creativity in different areas of my life.	Learners can reflect on the role creativity plays in different aspects of their life: in different lessons, during extra-curricular activities and at home.
Step 8	I can use mind mapping as a creative tool to help me generate ideas.	Learners can use mind mapping as a creative tool to support how they generate, develop and link ideas.
Step 9	I can outline how introducing something seemingly random can support creativity.	Learners can describe how a random stimulus (e.g. word, image or even sound) can spark creativity and support how they generate ideas.
Step 10	I can explain how considering different perspectives can support creativity.	Learners can explain ways to take alternative perspectives into account and how this impacts creativity.
Step 11	I can explain how to maximise creativity when working collaboratively.	Learners can explain ways to overcome 'groupthink', which is the tendency for consensus in groups leading to a lack of diversity in ideas.
Step 12	I can reflect on how I have used creative tools.	Learners can reflect on how different creative tools work and the different contexts in which they have used creative tools.
Step 13	I can select the most effective creative tools for my way of working and explain why.	Learners can reflect on how they approach creative tasks and evaluate the effectiveness of creative tools for themselves.
Step 14	I can suggest multiple creative tools that would be appropriate for a given situation.	Learners can identify the requirements of a given situation and justify more than one creative tool that would be suitable.
Step 15	I can select the most effective creative tool for a given situation and explain why.	Learners can evaluate the effectiveness of creative tools with respect to the requirements of the situation and choose the most effective one.



Staying Positive

The ability to use tactics and strategies to overcome setbacks and achieve goals.

It starts with learners being able to **recognise simple emotions** and suggest why people feel these.

The next stage is about developing learners' capacity to **keep trying when things go wrong**.

Once learners have mastered this, they move on to being able to **identify the positives in difficult situations**, and sharing this with others.

The next stage is about recognising the advantages of **risk taking** and knowing when it may be appropriate to take a risk.

The final steps are focused on learners **managing their emotions** in challenging contexts and choosing positive action.

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Step	Learner Descriptor	Teacher Explanation
Step 0	I can say why people might be happy or sad.	Learners can articulate basic emotions and understand that other people will have changing emotions too.
Step 1	I can say when things go wrong and why people can get angry or upset.	Learners can see that people might get angry or upset when things go wrong and see how this links to their own experiences.
Step 2	I can explain why giving up when something goes wrong does not help.	Learners can articulate why it is important to manage negative emotions when they face setbacks. They might not always be able to put this into practice.
Step 3	I try to stay calm when something goes wrong.	Learners can respond to setbacks calmly.
Step 4	I keep trying when something goes wrong, and think about what happened.	Learners can be seen to respond positively to setbacks but also try to understand why the problem occurred and overcome that.
Step 5	I keep trying when something goes wrong and help cheer other people up.	Learners continue to make an effort, even when they face setbacks, and can also cheer up their peers.
Step 6	I keep trying and encourage others to keep trying, even when things are difficult.	Learners keep trying and are effective in encouraging others to maintain their level of effort in the face of setbacks.
Step 7	I can look on the bright side in difficult situations and focus on that.	Learners can evaluate a situation to identify positive outcomes and focus on those rather than the negative side of a situation.
Step 8	I can explain the positive side of a difficult situation to others.	Learners can articulate a positive perspective to their peers and, while acknowledging challenges, explore them in a positive way.
Step 9	I can come up with ideas for changing difficult situations into positive opportunities.	Learners can actively seek ways to turn challenging or difficult situations into more positive ones.
Step 10	In difficult situations, I choose the best way to move forward instead of giving up.	Learners can evaluate the challenges in a situation and then continue to make progress in their tasks rather than giving up.
Step 11	I'm not afraid to take risks where I might make mistakes as I can say how I might learn from them.	Learners can confidently approach risks where they might make mistakes because they know and can explain that they will learn from them.
Step 12	I can assess and manage risks appropriately.	Learners can approach situations that involve risks, and assess and manage those risks appropriately.
Step 13	I can effectively recognise and assess my own negative emotions and take positive actions.	Learners can recognise and assess their emotions and choose an appropriate positive course of action.
Step 14	I can choose appropriate positive actions based on the context and impact they will have on others, when I am feeling negative emotions.	Learners demonstrate awareness of how their emotions and actions impact on others, and choose the best response for different contexts.
Step 15	I can choose appropriate positive actions when I am feeling negative emotions, in unfamiliar contexts, and reflect on the effect of this.	Learners can choose appropriate positive actions for an unfamiliar context, while acknowledging that they are feeling negative emotions.



Aiming High

The ability to set clear, tangible goals and devise a robust route to achieving them.

The first few steps are about **effort**: learners knowing why it is important to make an effort and what that might look like for them.

In the next stage, learners move into **goal planning**: being able to set their goals and break down what and how they will achieve them.

The next progression is learners reflecting and **using feedback** from others to support achievement of their goals.

Moving towards the top end, learners are able to create **long-term goals** and track effectively how they are moving towards them.

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Step	Learner Descriptor	Teacher Explanation
Step 0	I can say when I find something difficult.	Learners will need to identify when something they are doing is difficult and articulate this to an adult.
Step 1	I can tell someone what 'trying my best' means.	Learners can explain what 'trying my best' looks like in the context of their own work.
Step 2	I can explain why it is important to try my best if I'm going to get better.	Learners show pride in their higher achievements and can articulate how it links to effort.
Step 3	I can try my best and feel proud when I do.	Learners are aware of when they are working at their best, and find this a rewarding experience that they can take pride in.
Step 4	I look for chances to do something that I might find difficult and ask an adult to set me extra challenges.	Learners can seek out opportunities to give themselves extra challenge to increase their achievements. Teachers will provide learners with an achievable challenge.
Step 5	I can choose goals with some help from my teacher or another adult.	Learners can set a simple goal that is appropriate and achievable, with the support of a teacher or another adult.
Step 6	I can set my own goal that gives me a chance to try something I might find difficult.	Learners are able to approximately gauge what a stretching goal looks like and define that for themselves.
Step 7	I can order and prioritise different tasks to help me achieve my goal.	Learners can break down simple goals into steps and prioritise those steps to achieve the goal.
Step 8	I can identify and ensure access to appropriate resources to achieve my goals.	Learners understand that they might need other resources (people, funds, tools) to achieve their goals and can identify those needed to achieve a simple goal.
Step 9	I can create a plan to achieve a simple goal, breaking down tasks and securing resources, independently.	Learners can create a simple plan by setting a goal, prioritising tasks and securing resources.
Step 10	I can reflect on my skill set with accuracy and identify opportunities to improve further.	Learners can analyse and justify their own strengths and weaknesses, and come up with sensible ways of developing themselves further.
Step 11	I can motivate myself to work autonomously to fulfil my plans and to achieve SMART targets to reach my goal.	Learners are able to set SMART targets and apply themselves to seeing through their plans over a period of time.
Step 12	I seek out feedback, including constructive criticism, to support me in achieving my goals.	Learners seek wider input to achieve their goals and to chart their own progress against their plans, including both compliments and constructive criticism.
Step 13	I can create long term goals, taking into account my own strengths and weaknesses.	Learners can evaluate their longer term plans in terms of their own strengths, weaknesses and ambitions.
Step 14	I can set regular milestones to help me reach my long term goals and keep me on track.	Learners can break down their longer-term plans into steps with milestones that keep them on track to achieve their goals.
Step 15	I can modify my milestones and actions to respond to changes.	Learners are able to incorporate setbacks or changing circumstances into forward planning and make appropriate adaptations to keep them on track for success.



Leadership

Supporting, encouraging and motivating others to achieve a shared goal.

The first few steps are about developing **empathy**: learners can first describe their own feelings and then those of others.

At the next stage, learners develop their ability to support in **decision making** and ensuring tasks are completed.

From Step 8, learners focus on being able to **identify the strengths and interests** of the people they are leading, before applying their understanding to effectively **motivate** their team.

In the final steps, learners build their understanding of different **leadership styles**, their strengths and limitations and how they might be adapted for different scenarios.

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Step	Learner Descriptor	Teacher Explanation
Step 0	I can sometimes describe how I feel.	Learners can sometimes articulate their feelings, in simple terms to a trusted adult.
Step 1	I can describe how I am feeling to my team.	Learners are able to articulate and explain their feelings in a group situation, working with others.
Step 2	I can describe how my team mates are feeling.	Learners can articulate how other members of their team are feeling, demonstrating a basic level of empathy and perception of others.
Step 3	I can make sure that everyone has a job and can help team mates when they need me.	Learners can allocate tasks between different team members and are able to identify when their peers might need support or assistance.
Step 4	I take responsibility for my team mates completing their jobs on time.	Learners can take a leadership role that requires them to divide roles between their peers, and encourage them to complete the tasks effectively.
Step 5	I can help my team come to a decision that most people are happy with and finish the task.	Learners can contribute to team discussion to reach a consensus on what actions should be undertaken. Learners are able to then see a simple task through to completion.
Step 6	I can make decisions to resolve disagreements between team mates.	Learners can resolve disagreements between their peers when they are in a leadership position e.g. by voting.
Step 7	I can explain my own strengths and weaknesses and how to make my best contribution.	Learners have developed the self-awareness to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, and how they can make their best contribution to the group.
Step 8	I can explain my team mates' strengths and interests.	Learners are able to identify and articulate the strengths and interests of others in their teams.
Step 9	I use my understanding of my team mates' strengths to help achieve team goals.	Learners are able to apply, in a basic way, their understanding of peers' strengths and interests to allocate tasks in a justifiable way between them.
Step 10	I can see when disagreements are developing, and can use strategies to resolve these.	Learners can perceive when disagreements might be developing and can use some basic approaches to resolve these through structured discussion.
Step 11	I can explain some different ways to motivate my team.	Learners understand the role of motivation in leadership and can explain some basic approaches to motivating their teams.
Step 12	I can adapt the way I motivate my team, depending on the situation.	Learners are able to judge the appropriate approach to motivating their teams in different situations.
Step 13	I can describe different leadership styles and share which style I think I use and why.	Learners understand that there are different styles of leadership and are able to judge what type of leadership they tend towards e.g. autocratic; democratic etc.
Step 14	I can explain positive and negative aspects of different leadership styles and am aware of the limitations of the leadership style I tend towards.	Learners understand that leadership styles have positive and negative aspects to them and can outline the negative aspects of their leadership style.
Step 15	I can adapt my leadership style depending on the situation I am in and who I am working with.	Learners can assess a situation, identify which leadership style is most appropriate and adopt that style.



Teamwork

Working cooperatively with others towards achieving a shared goal.

The initial steps are about **understanding why we work in teams** before moving to the next stage which explores how learners can become **effective team members**.

The next stage is all about being a **supportive and inclusive** team member, focused on how learners can ensure everyone's ideas are valued.

From Step 9, the developments are about understanding and **managing team dynamics** to help avoid negative conflict.

Finally, learners look at how they can **evaluate team performance** to help make improvements.

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Step	Learner Descriptor	Teacher Explanation
Step 0	I am happy to take turns with other children.	Learners are able and willing to take turns with their peers.
Step 1	I can work with other children to do something together.	Learners are able to make a contribution towards a bigger task as part of a group.
Step 2	I can explain why teams are sometimes better than working by myself.	Learners are able to articulate why teamwork can be more effective than individual work in some situations.
Step 3	I help with different jobs in my team and take responsibility for finishing my job.	Learners can take on different jobs in their team to complete the team task.
Step 4	I can get on well with my team and find ways to resolve a disagreement.	Learners are able to address disagreements and disputes in an effective way, and generally work well with others.
Step 5	When I finish my task, I can help others complete their tasks on time too.	Learners can think beyond their own part of a task and actively try to support other team members to complete their jobs.
Step 6	I help my team make decisions and I make my own suggestions.	Learners can contribute to the decision-making process and are willing to put forward their own ideas.
Step 7	I recognise the value of others' ideas and make useful contributions myself.	Learners can see that their peers will also contribute valuable ideas, and will be willing to compromise to reach a joint decision.
Step 8	I include all team mates in group discussions and encourage them to contribute.	Learners can see the importance of including all team members in discussions and actively encourage contributions from their peers in their team.
Step 9	I can spot when I might be getting into an argument and take steps to avoid it.	Learners are able to perceive when conflict with their peers might be negative for the team and take steps to avoid it.
Step 10	I can spot when others might be getting into an argument and make suggestions to avoid it.	Learners demonstrate an awareness of the wider team dynamics and work to avoid negative conflict in the team.
Step 11	I can contribute to team meetings in a measured, valuable and concise way.	Learners can make a valuable contribution to team discussions which builds on previous conversations and addresses the particular challenge the team faces.
Step 12	I can reflect on the team's progress and make suggestions for improvements.	Learners can accurately analyse the performance of the team and suggest improvements.
Step 13	I can reflect on and evaluate the team's approaches to tasks and carefully influence to get better results.	Learners can evaluate a team's approach, and use their influence to improve a team's performance and the outcomes of a task.
Step 14	I can evaluate the team leader's strengths and weaknesses and actively support them when they need me.	Learners can evaluate the performance of a team leader, and actively engage to support the performance of the leader, improving the outcomes for the team.
Step 15	I can identify the skills of my team members and explain how we can support each other to improve.	Learners can identify the skills of other team members and are able to give and receive peer feedback focused on improving team performance.

Join the Skills Builder PARTNERSHIP

Thanks for your interest in being part of the Skills Builder Partnership. We are a not-for-profit partnership of 350+ schools, 130+ employers and 30+ skills-building organisations. Our simple school membership gives the tools and support to build essential skills as part of your school life.



Training and support

Our team of outstanding qualified teachers help your staff to build their confidence in teaching essential skills and supporting students' progress.

(Two sessions annually)



Classroom resources

We provide a wide range of resources to help your learners build essential skills, including posters, certificates and a series of short video-based activities.



Assessment tool

Our easy-to-use web tool helps teaching staff assess the students they work with quickly and effectively, allowing them to view their data clearly and decide next steps.

Find out more and download a full information booklet at
skillsbuilder.org/primary-schools

Benefit from additional support

We also have a full partnership offer for schools, where our team of expert teachers can support in delivering an outstanding essential skills programme. In delivering these elements, we price them to cover our costs.



Training and Support

Our team of outstanding qualified teachers help your staff to build their confidence in teaching essential skills and supporting students' progress. We will work closely to integrate skills education into your curriculum.



Challenge Days

Challenge Days provide an exciting and engaging way for students across a class, a year group or even the whole school to work together and use their essential skills in a real-life context.



Trips to Employers

Trips help students make the critical link between the skills built in class and the working world. They meet volunteers from a range of organisations and work together to get a flavour of the industry.



Classroom projects and resources

Classroom projects bring learning to life and let students develop and apply new essential skills, while our punchy 10-minute videos are perfect for tutor time. We also provide a wide range of printable resources.



Assessment tool

The Skills Builder Framework breaks each skill down into teachable and learnable chunks; our easy-to-use web tool helps teaching staff to assess their students quickly and view their data clearly, giving evidence of progress.

Find out more and download a full information booklet at skillsbuilder.org/primary-schools

Morecambe Bay Community Primary



Morecambe Bay Community Primary School in Lancashire have had a real focus over the last three years on building their students' essential skills.

How do they use the Skills Builder Framework?

Morecambe Bay Community School runs a Partner School Skills Builder programme which includes teacher training on how to use and embed the Framework, Challenge Days and projects focused on building the eight essential skills, and trips out to businesses. Recent business trips have included The Department for Work and Pensions and EY where students were set a work-based challenge to develop their essential skills in a real-life setting.

Why do they use the Framework?

The resources and training that form part of the Partner School programme have allowed the whole school to focus on developing their essential skills. The Framework has allowed students to self-reflect on their own performance and their group's performance to ensure they know what they need to do next to continuing building their skills. The Framework has also allowed teachers to signpost the eight skills in every lesson and across school life.

What's been the impact of using the Framework?

One of the things staff have noticed is the children's use of language and their ability to share their experiences in relation to the language from the Framework. For example, they can now articulate how they managed to solve problems because they've listened really well to other people. This has had a positive impact on what happens in the classroom. For example, children are now able to solve conflict by talking about it and reflecting on what they could do better.

“ The eight skills are vital for life-long learning and if we can fit in as many opportunities as possible to sign-post children to these skills in as many different contexts and scenarios that is going to have a great impact on our children. ”

Rose Hancock, Year 5/6 teacher

“ Staff and children are confident in recognising and developing the 8 skills. The whole process has been really beneficial and we hope to continue to build on its success in the future. ”

Cassie Jones, Deputy Head

“ The Framework has had a massive impact on what happens in the classroom. The skills have directly fallen into our everyday life in school, children are now able to solve conflict by talking about it. ”

Rosie Hancock, Year 5/6 teacher

Shaftesbury Park Primary



Shaftesbury Park Primary School is in Wandsworth, South London. For several years now the school has had a focus on enterprise and enabling children to make the most of their talents.

How do they use the Skills Builder Framework?

Shaftesbury Park have used the Skills Builder Framework for two years to embed the development of the eight essential skills across the school from Years 1-6. The staff receive training on how to develop the eight skills and use the Framework to assess where their students are at, and what skills they need to focus on. Students have the opportunity to use the skills in projects and Challenge Days as well as going on business trips to see the skills in action in the world of work.

Why do they use the Framework?

Deputy Head Andrew Smith explains the growth of essential skill development within the school came from thinking: 'What skills do children need in the future, what are the core employability skills they'll need?'. The Framework enables teachers to accurately assess their students so they can target their strengths and weaknesses, work out which skills need more focus at a class level, and prepare to support students falling behind in a particular skill.

What's been the impact of using the Framework?

James, a Year 5 teacher who supported students through City Pitch, where they designed and built an app for a social purpose, was clear that by developing their essential skills throughout the year, the students were well equipped to tackle any challenge. He commented on how important the skill of Aiming High was for the children who hadn't believed they'd achieve so much.

“ The Skills Builder Framework makes it more on par to any other lesson. The data allows you to see progress being made and is strong evidence of impact. ”

Andrew Smith, Deputy Head

“ The girls have found their voices and grown whilst the boys have shown greater maturity when working in teams, due to the valuable set of skills that are setting them on the right path for life. ”

Year 3 Teacher

“ The biggest impact is the children's aspirations. They've changed, they see more opportunity. They've been given new visions of what they can do with their future. ”

Andrew Smith, Deputy Head

Further reading



LKMco examines the evidence

In 2017, we collaborated with LKMco, a dedicated education thinktank, to research the state of enterprise education in today's schools, as well as evaluate Enabling Enterprise's approach. The result is a detailed look at the rationale for building the essential skills and the core role they should have in our education system. Along the way it also explores what effectively building these skills looks like, and how progress can be meaningfully assessed and tracked. This report serves as further evidence of the need for systemic change, as well as being useful and informative for those invested in unlocking their students' hidden potential. Download the full report at [skillsbuilder.org](https://www.skillsbuilder.org)

¹ CBI (2016), 'Education and Skills Survey', CBI

² Cullinane, C. and Montacute, R. (2017), *Life Lessons*, Sutton Trust [suttontrust.com/research-paper/life-lessons]

³ Millard, W., Menzies, L. and Baar, S. (2017), 'Enterprise Skills: Teachability, Measurability and Next Steps', LKMco



Consolidating all we've learned

The Missing Piece: The Essential Skills Education Forgot details the rationale for building essential skills, in the light of a decade of practice with over 150,000 children and young people. It rigorously examines the arguments for and evidence behind the six principles, as well as discussing the thinking behind the development of the Skills Builder Framework.

The book also looks to the future, outlining a roadmap for the changes we must make to our education system so that every student can be equipped with the skills, experiences and aspirations that will empower them to succeed in life.

⁴ Ravenscroft, T. (2017), *The Missing Piece: The Essential Skills that Education Forgot*, London: John Catt Publishing Ltd.

⁵ Gadsby B, (2017) 'Challenge the Impossible', Teach First

The approach

The Skills Builder Framework was originally developed by Enabling Enterprise to underpin their programmes. It was developed from a review of the literature, the existing national curriculum and then through work with over 300 schools. Tom Ravenscroft's 2017 book, *The Missing Piece*, explored the full rationale behind the approach and the Framework. It also highlighted the need for a shared language and common approach to these skills.

Over the period from Summer 2017, Enabling Enterprise worked with key partners including BITC, Ark, Teach First, Career Ready and the Careers & Enterprise Company to refine and improve this Framework. During this period, the Framework also benefitted from the generous advice and guidance of many individuals and organisations who are highlighted on the following pages.

We also ran a series of five roundtables in October and November 2017 where skills-building organisations and employers fed into the refinement of the Framework. Finally, the Framework was piloted by over 20 organisations to test its transferability to different settings. We are extremely grateful to all of these organisations and individuals. Thank you.



Paul Drechsler

President of the Confederation of British Industry and Chair of Teach First

“ Skills Builder gives everyone working with children and young people important guidance on the behaviours and attributes they need to succeed. These eight essential characteristics are the foundation on which to build our next generation. I call on business to take these skills, champion them, embrace them, and use them to support their interactions with young people. ”



Dr Mary Bousted

Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union

“ We have a duty as educators to think deeply about what children and young people need to be able to do in a society that will change radically, in a future where there will be few, if any, jobs for life. We have to talk about how we make the knowledge that we teach our children in school real, how we enable them to synthesise knowledge and use it in new situations. I think Skills Builder is a fantastic device to do that. ”



Dame Julia Cleverdon

Vice President of Business in the Community and Trustee of Step Up To Serve

“ Skills Builder is practical. It's simple. It's had a seven-year track record of being tested: it was not developed by a thinktank who've never been near a classroom in their lives, but started with teachers. It's been consistently tested through one organisation by many others. It's absolutely what we need - and all the national, top-down organisations need to adopt this. ”

Who's involved?

Over the last four years creating Skills Builder, we have collaborated with a huge number of individuals and organisations. They have helped us refine the Framework, cement best practice, measure impact and plan our next steps. We are enormously grateful for all their support.

Development Group

The Development Group led the project to refine the Framework.

Tom Ravenscroft

Enabling Enterprise

Sam George

Enabling Enterprise

Anne Spackman

Career Ready

Chloe Holmes

Ark

Katy Neep

Business in the Community

Maxine Barrett

Teach First

Ralph Scott

Teach First

Jonathan Boys

The Careers & Enterprise Company

Advisors

We're grateful to the advisors who helped to refine the Framework and principles.

Paul Drechsler

CBI

Dame Julia Cleverdon

Business in the Community

Jo Owen

The Leadership Partnership

Prof. John Holman

University of York

Richard Hardie

UBS

Sarah Craner

UBS

Stephen Isherwood

Institute of Student Employers

Prof. Jose Chambers

Comino Foundation

Prof. Bill Lucas

University of Winchester

Elnaz Kashef

Education & Employers

Julian Astle

The RSA

Janet Clark

National Education Union

Kate McGoey

Barclays LifeSkills

Samantha Butters

Fair Education Alliance

Laura Barbour

Sutton Trust

Brett Wigdortz

Teach First

Sarah Young

Impetus-PEF

Ross Hall

Ashoka

Bethia McNeil

Centre for Youth Impact

Jo Clunie

KPMG Foundation

Lucy Ball

KPMG Foundation

Five expert groups

In order to refine and develop each section of our Framework, we have worked with experts experienced in building the essential skills, as well as a host of employers from different sectors. Their perspective has been invaluable, and we thank them for their passion and feedback.

Communication skills

Lizzie Lynch
Voice 21

Alice Penfold
National Literacy Trust

Richard Hull
Talk The Talk

Kate Freeman
I CAN

Sam Baars
LKMco

Amanda Moorghen
English-Speaking Union

Ben Kahn
Spiral

Alison Coates
English Speaking Board

Creative Problem-Solving skills

Toby Baker
NESTA

Asma Shah
You Make It

Diana Fisher-Naylor
CCE

Kiri Grant
Cardboard Citizens

Victoria Shaksan
Lewisham Youth Theatre

Tom Doust
Institute of Imagination

Self-Management skills

Chloe Thomas
Jamie's Farm

Lily Eastwood
Hackney Pirates

Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang
The Lighthouse

Joseph Watfa
Football Beyond Borders

James Mannion
Pivotal Education

Interpersonal skills

Ayesha Ahmed
Faculty of Education,
University of Cambridge

Molly Singleton
British Exploring Society

Olly Offord
Franklin Scholars

Manjit Shellis
UFA

Andy Smith
London Youth Rowing

Rupert Higham
UCL Institute of Education

Employers

Fabiola Williams
White Stuff

Rebecca Antonini
First State Investments

Christopher Temmink
Exterior Media

Leonie Smith
Costain

David Smith
Costain Skanska JV

Danielle Fullwood
Guy's and St. Thomas'
NHS Foundation Trust

Emma Cumming
Forward3D

Jeff Joseph
Higgins Construction

Stephen Osborne
Pret A Manger

Christina Warren
Teach First



Skills Builder
PARTNERSHIP

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