

Skills Builder Award

Case Study Submission 2025-26



Name of educational institution:	Perran-ar-worthal Primary School
Award Level you are applying for	Gold
Total number of learners who have had opportunities to learn & apply the skills:	203
Total number of educators who have been involved with teaching the essential skills:	12

What is the context of your school?

Location, age of learners, type of institution, what has your school already done with skills, why did you get involved with Skills Builder?

Perran-ar-Worthal is a primary school located in Cornwall, providing education for children aged 4–11 across the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. As a community focused school, we are committed to developing confident, independent learners who are equipped with the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for success both in school and beyond.

Before becoming involved with Skills Builder, we recognised the importance of developing children's wider skills alongside academic achievement. Staff regularly provided opportunities for learners to develop communication, teamwork, creativity, problem solving and leadership skills through lessons, collaborative activities, enrichment opportunities and our wider school values. However, we wanted to create a more consistent, structured and progressive approach to explicitly teaching and assessing these essential skills across all year groups.

We became involved with Skills Builder because we wanted to provide all children with a shared language for understanding and improving their skills. The Universal Framework has enabled us to identify clear progression, plan purposeful teaching opportunities and support children in recognising how these skills apply across the curriculum and in everyday life. Through dedicated weekly Skills Builder lessons, assessment and regular opportunities to practise skills in different contexts, we are embedding essential skills as a key part of our school culture and preparing our learners for future learning, work and life.

What was the overall impact of the programme?

What do you feel the overall impact of using the skills has been for staff, learners, and the wider community? Have there been any particular highlights? What impact did the resources and platforms from Skills Builder have?

The overall impact of the Skills Builder programme has been extremely positive for our school community. It has provided learners and staff with a shared language to understand, discuss and develop essential skills across all areas of school life. Learners are now more confident in identifying the skills they are using, reflecting on their progress and recognising how these skills support their learning and relationships with others.

For staff, the programme has provided a clear structure and progression framework, helping teachers to explicitly teach, assess and develop essential skills in a consistent way. The Universal Framework and online platform have been particularly valuable in supporting planning, tracking progress and ensuring activities are appropriately pitched for different ages and abilities.

A key highlight has been seeing children recognise and celebrate their own development through Skills Builder language, as well as seeing these skills applied naturally across the curriculum. Our Learner of the Week and Citizen of the Week awards, which are linked to essential skills, have helped to celebrate children who demonstrate these skills in meaningful ways.

The wider community has also benefited from a clearer understanding of the skills we value as a school, with parents and governors becoming more aware of how we are preparing children for future learning, work and life.

How did you embed Principle 1: Keep it simple?

*How have you built awareness of the importance of essential skills across your institution?
How do you ensure all educators and learners use a consistent language when referring to the skills?
What best practice would you like to share with other schools and colleges?*

At Perran-ar-Worthal, we have embedded Principle 1: Keep it simple by ensuring that essential skills are introduced, discussed and reinforced consistently across the whole school. We have built awareness of their importance by making essential skills a visible and valued part of our school culture. They are regularly referenced in assemblies, lessons, staff meetings, newsletters and wider school communications, helping learners, staff, parents and governors understand that these skills are fundamental to learning, personal development and future success.

To ensure consistency, all staff use the shared language from the Skills Builder framework when teaching, discussing and assessing essential skills. The eight essential skills are referred to explicitly during Skills Builder lessons and across the curriculum, with teachers highlighting when learners are demonstrating skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, creativity and leadership. Assessment grids on the Skills Builder website are regularly updated, and staff meetings provide opportunities to discuss progress, share examples and ensure a consistent approach.

A key piece of best practice we would share with other schools is the importance of making the language of essential skills part of everyday conversations. We have found that using simple, repeated language helps children understand and apply the skills independently. Celebrating examples of skills in action through our Learner of the Week and Citizen of the Week awards has been particularly effective in helping children recognise that essential skills are not just taught in lessons but are demonstrated throughout school life.

How did you embed Principle 2: Start early, keep going?

How do you approach these essential skills for learners of different ages or stages?

How do you ensure continuity in how learners build essential skills across their education?

How do you take an inclusive approach to essential skills building?

What best practice would you like to share with other schools and colleges?

We have embedded Principle 2: Start early, keep going by ensuring that essential skills development begins in the Early Years and continues progressively throughout the school journey. We recognise that skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, creativity, listening and leadership are fundamental to children's learning, confidence and independence, so we introduce the language of essential skills from the very start of their education.

The Skills Builder framework allows us to adapt teaching to suit the different ages, experiences and stages of development of our learners. Younger children are supported to develop essential skills through play, talk, collaborative activities and practical experiences, while older learners are given more opportunities to apply these skills independently through lessons, projects, problem-solving activities and wider school responsibilities. The Universal Framework provides clear progression, ensuring that teaching is appropriately challenging and builds on prior learning.

Continuity is supported through our whole school approach, with all classes following the same framework, language and progression. Regular assessment and staff discussions help teachers understand where learners are in their development and plan appropriate next steps. Twice each half term, staff review progress and update assessment grids on the Skills Builder website, ensuring that learners' skill development is tracked as they move through the school.

We take an inclusive approach by recognising that all learners develop skills at different rates and by providing opportunities for every child to practise and demonstrate essential skills in a range of contexts. Activities are adapted to meet individual needs, allowing all children to experience success and make progress.

The best practice we would share with other schools is to introduce essential skills early, make them part of everyday language and provide regular opportunities for children to practise them across the curriculum. Consistency over time helps learners develop confidence and understand how these skills support them both in school and in the wider world.

How did you embed Principle 3: Measure it?

How do you use Universal Framework 2.0 to support consistent assessment?

How do you assess learners' essential skills and track progress over time?

What combination of questioning, observation and portfolio-building is the best fit for you and your setting?

What best practice would you like to share with other schools and colleges?

At Perran-ar-Worthal, we have embedded Principle 3: Measure it by using the Skills Builder Universal Framework 2.0 to support a consistent and progressive approach to assessing essential skills. The framework provides clear steps of development for each skill, allowing teachers to identify learners' starting points, plan appropriate next steps and ensure that teaching is matched to individual needs.

We assess learners' essential skills through a combination of regular observation, questioning and discussion activities. Teachers use the Skills Builder online platform to record progress and update assessment grids, ensuring that learners' development is tracked over time. Twice each half term, staff meetings provide dedicated time for teachers to review progress, discuss evidence, moderate judgements and identify where further support or challenge may be needed.

Our approach combines observation of skills in action with purposeful questioning and opportunities for learners to reflect on their own development. For example, teachers observe how children apply teamwork during collaborative tasks, communication during presentations and discussions, and problem solving during practical activities across the curriculum. Learners are encouraged to talk about the skills they are using and explain how they can improve.

A key piece of best practice we would share with other schools is to ensure assessment is meaningful and embedded into everyday teaching rather than viewed as an additional task. Using the Universal Framework alongside regular professional discussions has helped us build a clear picture of each learner's strengths and next steps, enabling us to provide targeted teaching and celebrate progress in essential skills.

How did you embed Principle 4: Teach directly?

Where do you make time just to focus on directly teaching skills?

How do you plan to ensure that all learners are receiving direct teaching in essential skills, pitched at the right level?

What best practice would you like to share with other schools and colleges?

We have embedded Principle 4: Teach directly by ensuring that all learners have dedicated opportunities to explicitly develop their essential skills. Every class has a timetabled weekly Skills Builder lesson, providing protected time to focus specifically on teaching and practising the eight essential skills. These sessions follow the Skills Builder Universal Framework 2.0, allowing teachers to deliver lessons that are appropriately pitched and matched to learners' individual stages of development.

Teachers use the framework and assessment information to plan lessons that build progressively on prior learning. Activities are carefully selected to provide appropriate challenge, with opportunities for learners to understand each skill, see it modelled, practise it and apply it in different contexts. Staff use questioning, discussion and reflection to help children understand how they can improve their skills and transfer them into everyday learning.

Direct teaching of essential skills is not limited to weekly Skills Builder lessons; educators also make explicit links across the curriculum. For example, teachers identify when learners are using communication during class discussions, teamwork during collaborative tasks and problem solving during investigations and challenges.

Our best practice to share with other schools is the importance of making time for direct skills teaching while also embedding opportunities to apply these skills throughout the curriculum. Having a consistent whole-school approach, supported by the Universal Framework, ensures that every learner receives structured teaching at the right level and develops the confidence to recognise and use essential skills independently.

How did you embed Principle 5: Keep practicing?

How do you link opportunities to deliberately practice essential skills into different subject areas?

Where are there extension or extra-curricular opportunities for learners to apply and practice essential skills steps in a deliberate way?

What best practice would you like to share with other schools and colleges?

We have embedded Principle 5: Keep practicing by ensuring that learners have regular opportunities to apply and develop essential skills across all areas of school life. While our weekly Skills Builder lessons provide dedicated time to explicitly teach and practise skills, we recognise that children make the greatest progress when they can repeatedly apply these skills in meaningful contexts.

Teachers deliberately plan opportunities for learners to practise essential skills across the curriculum. For example, in English, children develop communication and creativity through discussions, debates, drama and extended writing. In Mathematics, learners practise problem solving and critical thinking when tackling challenges and explaining their reasoning. In Science, children develop teamwork, evaluation and problem-solving skills through investigations, experiments and enquiry-based learning. Across all subjects, teachers make explicit links to the essential skills language, helping learners recognise how and when they are using these skills.

Learners also have opportunities to practise essential skills through wider school experiences and enrichment activities. These include school council, lego league, residential trips, sporting events, performances and clubs. These experiences provide authentic opportunities for children to develop leadership, teamwork, communication and creativity in different settings.

We use reflection and feedback to help learners understand their progress and identify next steps. Staff highlight examples of skills in action and celebrate these through our Learner of the Week and Citizen of the Week awards, reinforcing the importance of continued practice.

The best practice we would share with other schools is to make essential skills visible and purposeful throughout the curriculum rather than seeing them as separate from everyday learning. Providing frequent opportunities to practise skills in different contexts helps learners develop confidence, independence and the ability to transfer these skills beyond the classroom.

How did you embed Principle 6: Bring it to life?

How do learners apply their essential skills in projects with real outcomes?

How do you help connect classroom learning to community or employers?

What best practice would you like to share with other schools and colleges?

We have embedded Principle 6: Bring it to life by providing learners with meaningful opportunities to apply their essential skills in real-life contexts. We believe that children develop confidence and

understanding when they can see the purpose of these skills beyond individual lessons and recognise how they support them in the wider world.

Learners apply their essential skills through a range of projects and activities with real outcomes. For example, our Lego League projects provide opportunities for children to develop teamwork, creativity, problem solving and communication while working collaboratively to design, build and present solutions to challenges. School council activities allow learners to practise leadership, communication and decision-making skills by representing their peers and contributing ideas to improve school life. Performances, exhibitions and presentations also provide authentic opportunities for children to develop confidence, creativity and communication skills for a real audience.

We make links between classroom learning and the wider community through opportunities such as visitors, local events, trips and partnerships. Children are encouraged to see how essential skills are used by people in different roles and careers, helping them understand the relevance of these skills for their future. Our curriculum provides opportunities for children to engage with real-world problems, such as sustainability projects, community initiatives and enterprise activities, where they can apply their learning in purposeful ways.

A key piece of best practice we would share with other schools is the importance of creating opportunities where learners have a genuine purpose and audience for their work. When children understand why they are developing a skill and can apply it in meaningful situations, they become more motivated, reflective and independent learners. Embedding essential skills into real experiences helps children recognise that these skills are valuable not only in school but throughout their lives.

What is next for essential skills development at your institution?

What do you plan to do next to build off your successes or to address any challenges?

Our next steps for essential skills development are to continue embedding the Skills Builder approach across all areas of school life and to further strengthen the links between skills teaching, assessment and curriculum learning. We are proud of the progress made so far in developing a shared language and consistent approach, but we recognise that essential skills development is an ongoing journey.

Moving forward, we plan to continue developing staff confidence in identifying and planning opportunities for learners to apply essential skills across different subjects and real-life experiences. We will continue to use staff meetings to share best practice, review assessment information and ensure that teaching remains appropriately challenging and responsive to learners' needs.

A key next step is to further develop how we communicate learners' progress in essential skills with parents and carers. From next year, we will include Skills Builder progress within pupil reports, helping families understand the skills children are developing and how they can support this at home.

We also aim to expand opportunities for learners to apply essential skills through wider experiences, including community projects, enrichment activities, leadership opportunities and links with local organisations. By continuing to provide meaningful contexts for children to practise and demonstrate these skills, we hope to further develop confident, independent learners who understand the importance of essential skills for their future learning, work and life.