



## Better prepared

Essential skills and employment  
outcomes for young people

Elnaz Keshelpakdel, Tom Ravenscroft, Chris Percy  
February 2021

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## Welcome

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### Listening

The receiving, understanding, processing of what is said.

The skill is all about the information - whether it comes in a message.

During the skill steps, I take notes, only to take notes, understand, and respond in order.

Individuals then focus on listening effectively, then understanding, and then responding.

Beyond that, the focus might be on listening language.

The final steps are about perspective, comparing, being objective.

The final step is about perspective, comparing, being objective.

7 / Skills Builder Partnership



### Speaking

The oral message or ideas.

The skill is all about the message, being clear, and being heard. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard.

The next steps are about making points, logically, clearly, and with a clear purpose. Beyond that, the focus might be on listening language.

Beyond that, the focus might be on listening language.

8 / Skills Builder Partnership



### Problem Solving

The ability to find a solution to a problem or situation.

This skill focuses on the ability to find a solution to a problem or situation. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard.

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### Creativity

The use of imagination to generate new ideas.

Creativity is the ability to use imagination to generate new ideas. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard.

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10 / Skills Builder Partnership



### Staying Positive

The ability to use positive thoughts to overcome setbacks.

This skill is all about the ability to use positive thoughts to overcome setbacks. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard.

The next steps are about making points, logically, clearly, and with a clear purpose. Beyond that, the focus might be on listening language.

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### Aiming High

The ability to set and achieve a goal.

The skill is all about the ability to set and achieve a goal. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard.

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Beyond that, the focus might be on listening language.

12 / Skills Builder Partnership



### Leadership

Supporting, motivating, and inspiring others to achieve a goal.

This skill is all about the ability to support, motivate, and inspire others to achieve a goal. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard.

The next steps are about making points, logically, clearly, and with a clear purpose. Beyond that, the focus might be on listening language.

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13 / Skills Builder Partnership



### Teamwork

Working cooperatively with others towards achieving a shared goal.

This skill is all about the ability to work cooperatively with others towards achieving a shared goal. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard. It is about the message, being clear, and being heard.

The next steps are about making points, logically, clearly, and with a clear purpose. Beyond that, the focus might be on listening language.

Beyond that, the focus might be on listening language.

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Step	Statement
Step 0	I work with others in a positive way.
Step 1	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 2	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 3	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 4	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 5	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 6	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 7	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 8	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 9	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 10	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 11	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 12	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 13	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 14	I work with others to solve a problem.
Step 15	I work with others to solve a problem.



**We work with our partners to help everyone  
build the eight essential skills for success...**

 <b>in education</b>	 <b>at work</b>	 <b>and beyond</b>
<i>We work with</i>  <b>430<sup>+</sup></b> schools and colleges	<i>We work with</i>  <b>90<sup>+</sup></b> employer partners	<i>We work with</i>  <b>100<sup>+</sup></b> impact organisations





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Robert Craig | COO

#skillsweneed @Skills\_Builder

# What we are going to cover in the next 30 minutes...



# Building an evidence base





# Building an Evidence Base: Why build essential skills, and what works?



## Towards a Universal Framework for Essential Skills

A Review of the Skills Builder Framework



## How do essential skills influence life outcomes?

*An evidence review*



## Essential skills and their impact on education outcomes

*A quantitative analysis of the British Cohort Study*

Elnaz Kashafpaki & Tom Ravenscroft

January 2021



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# Methodology

## Survey

**Self-assessment against the Universal Framework** (*Skills score* = key predictor variable)

**Socio-economic factors** including gender, school type attended, region, FSM, ethnicity & parental engagement

**Reported current economic activity**, income if they are in employment & highest level of qualification

**Attitudes toward essential skills**, how they have been building them & where they are important

## Exploratory analysis showing:

**1. Who** has essential skills, and how does this vary by socio-economic background?

**2. How** young people build essential skills, and what are their attitudes to them?

**3. What** is the impact of essential skills on employment outcomes?



# What we found: Young people value essential skills



# Young people think that essential skills are important

Of young  
people...

Think that essential skills are  
important for...

**93%**

employment opportunities and recruitment

**90%**

overcoming difficulty and adversity in wider life

**77%**

academic performance (e.g. exams, coursework etc.)

**65%**

UCAS applications and university entrance



# But young people need more opportunities to build essential skills in education & employment



**90%** agree  
essential skills  
should be taught in  
schools and  
colleges

**45%** in  
employment don't  
believe their  
employers provide  
regular opportunities

# And higher levels of essential skills are associated with ambition, self-efficacy & perseverance

## Career ambition

Those reporting higher skills scores found their career ambitions easier to pursue.

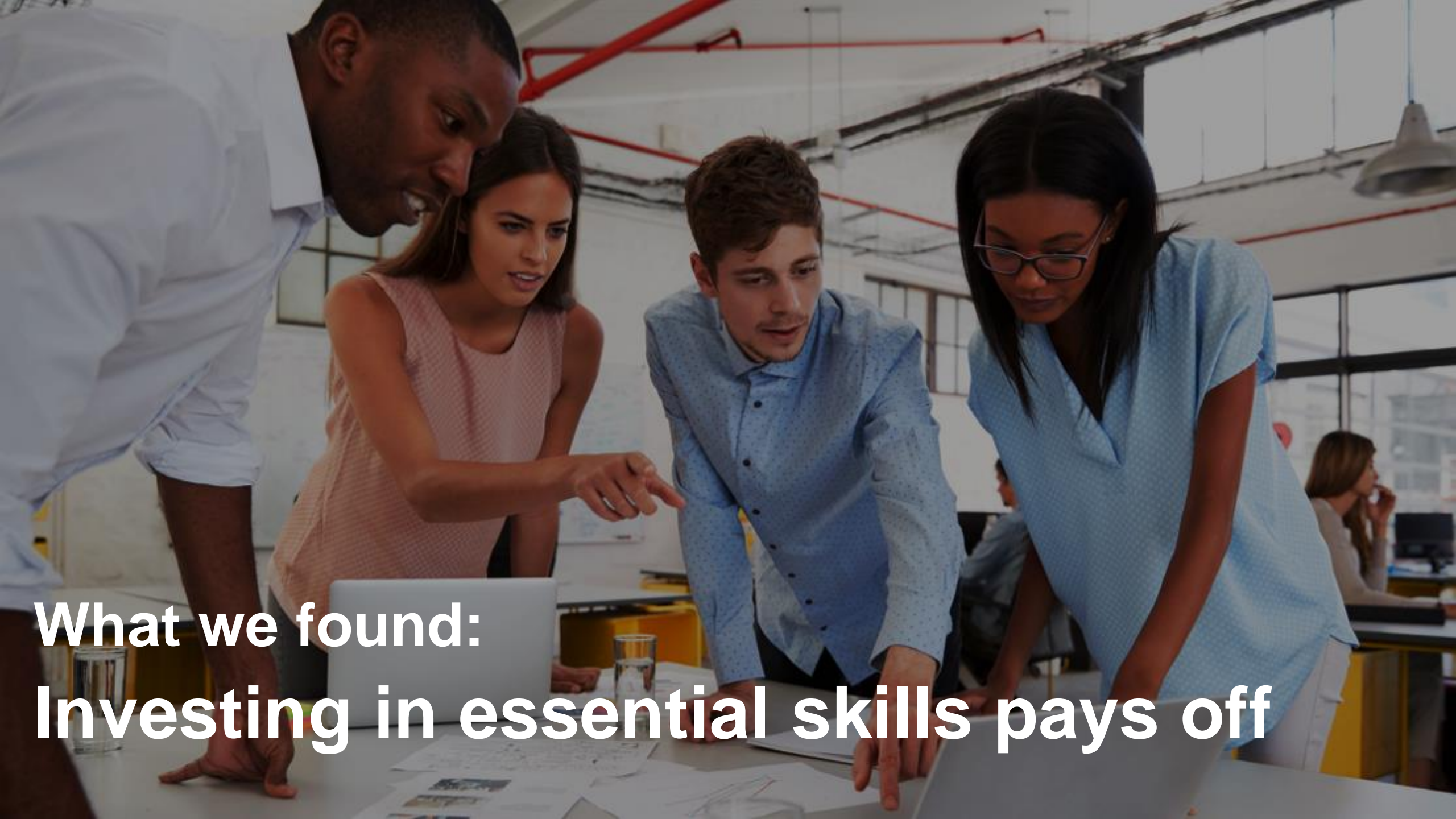
## Self-efficacy

Those with higher essential skills scores reported higher levels of self-efficacy, using proxy measurements.

## Perseverance of effort

Higher essential skills score and perseverance are positively correlated, using proxy measurements.\*

*\* Using measurements of self-efficacy and perseverance of effort as suggested by the past academic literature; the above relationships are significant at 5%.*



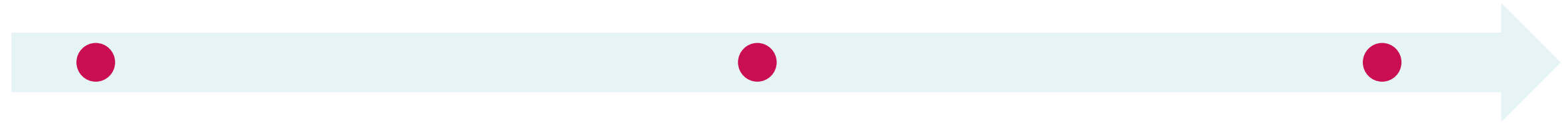
**What we found:  
Investing in essential skills pays off**

# We found a meaningful wage premium for individuals with higher levels of essential skills

Essential skills  
score=0

Essential skills score=54  
(median value)

Essential skills  
score=126 (max value)



Controlling for Socioeconomic Status

Wage  
premium=  
£3,400

Controlling for education level

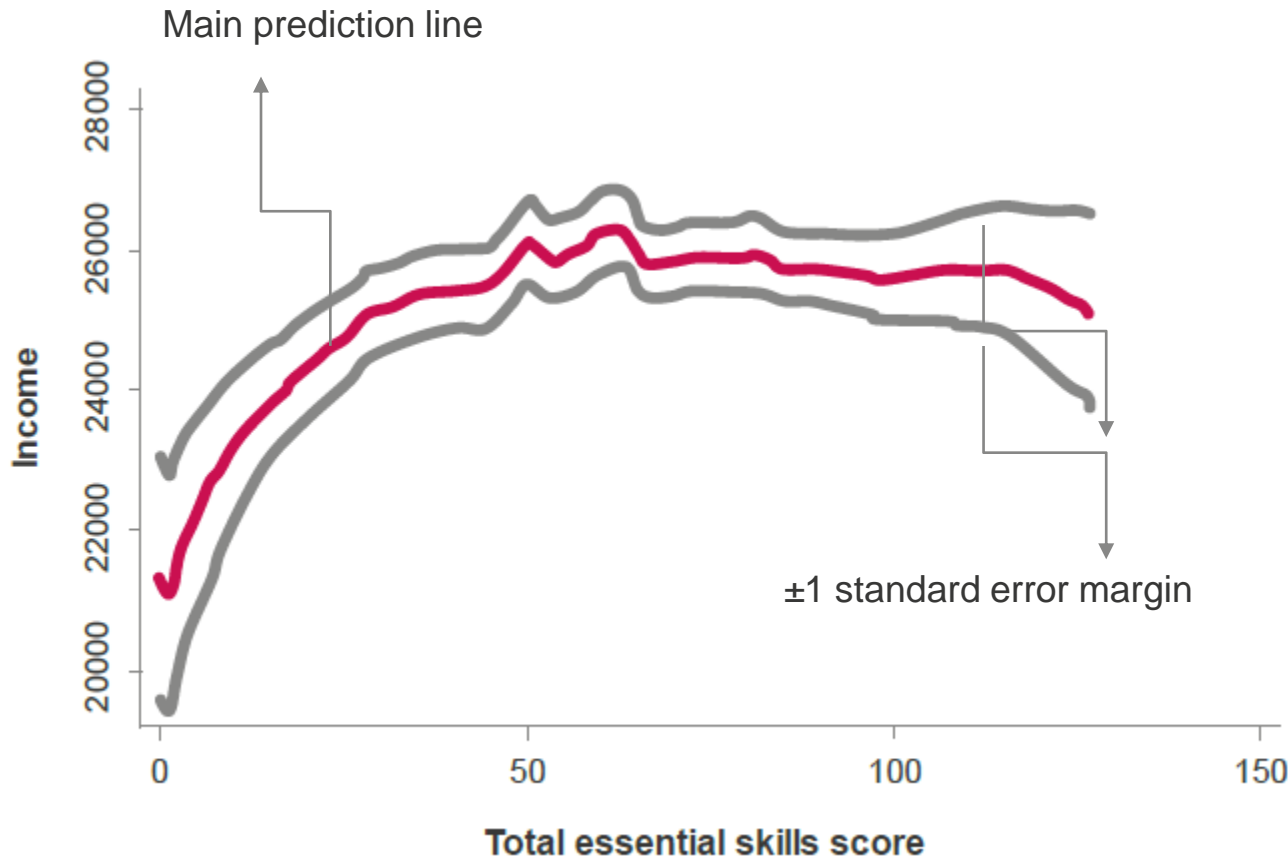
Wage  
premium=  
£2,900

The change in reported earnings for a young person moving from 1st percentile of skills score up to the median value (from 0 to 54) is an

**additional  
£3,400 per year**



# The relationship between essential skills and higher income is particularly strong for those with lower skill levels



## The analysis controls for respondents' backgrounds:

- advantage in upbringing (whether on FSM at school; attending a fee-paying school);
- educational context (self-reported level of parental support for education; attending a grammar school; special educational needs);
- demographic background (gender, ethnicity and age);
- region of the UK (providing some adjustment for different economic conditions and incomes between regions).

# Confidence in applying essential skills boosts that wage premium even further



**What we found:**  
**Some individuals have more opportunities to build their essential skills**



## Disadvantage plays a significant role in whether individuals have built their essential skills

		Total skill score ≥54 (sample median)	Median Score
Received FSM at school	No	86%	54
	Yes	14%	42
Social Grade	ABC1	78%	55
	C2DE	22%	41

Young people who received free school meals and are from a less privileged social grade have on average a lower skills score.



# Parental engagement boosts skill levels

Parental engagement	Total skill score $\geq 54$ (sample median)
Very Engaged	58%
Fairly Engaged	48%
Not very Engaged	44%
Not at all engaged	37%

Young people with high parental engagement are 20% more likely to have an above-average skill score.

# School type attended not a determining factor... however, students in Alternative Provision settings are falling behind

School type	Total skill score $\geq 54$ (sample median)	Median Score
Non-selective state	51%	55
Grammar / selective state	55%	58
Independent / fee paying	55%	57
Alternative Provision (e.g. Pupil Referral unit, special school)	15%	22

Do you have any additional or special educational needs?	Total skill score $\geq 54$ (sample median)
No	54%
Yes	47%

# Implications for educators and employers



# This research highlights the need for a coherent response from educators and employers

## Equity of opportunity

- Variance requires educators & employers to build skills in a nuanced, granular way at the level of the individual
- Targeted efforts to combat the effects of disadvantage

## Holistic provision of skills

- Essential skills require a discreet but holistic focus if we are to 'build back better'
- Educators should find ways to better engage parents & embed skills in everyday school life

## Myth Busting

- Challenging young peoples' perceptions of their capabilities as more fixed than flexible
- Ditching perceptions of essential skills as 'soft' or optional

## Investment and resources

- Invest in essential skills to boost outcomes for the less advantaged
- Listen to young people who feel strongly that essential skills should be a normal part of a good education



Thank you!



**Skills Builder**  
PARTNERSHIP

**One day, everyone will build  
the essential skills to succeed**

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