

# Building a Strong Foundation for Skills at Kirklandneuk Primary

How a Renfrewshire primary school is using the Shape Your Skills Award to give P5 pupils a clear pathway for leadership and life skills.



## At a Glance

Kirklandneuk Primary in Renfrewshire wanted a planned and progressive approach to developing essential skills in pupils from Primary 5 to Primary 7. They had activities for older pupils, but there was a gap for P5 – the crucial “starting point” year.

Deputy Headteacher, Alison Coyle, secured a place on the Shape Your Skills Award pilot from January to June 2025. Within weeks, pupils and teachers saw results: greater confidence, better teamwork, and pupils actively using the language of skills in and out of the classroom.

The school will now deliver the award again in 2025/26 and embed it as the first step in their leadership skills pathway.

## Why the School Needed a Solution

Kirklandneuk’s leadership team wanted something that:

- Fitted the Curriculum for Excellence
- Worked across different subjects and teaching styles
- Linked directly to the meta-skills framework
- Gave pupils a recognised, accredited outcome
- Was easy to deliver without extra workload for teachers

They also wanted a way to recognise and celebrate pupils’ personal growth – not just academic results.



# Why Shape Your Skills Award Was the Right Fit

The Shape Your Skills Award develops five core skills:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Organisation
- Confidence

It's flexible – teachers can run it in single classes, across projects, or as part of other areas of the curriculum – and comes with ready-to-use lesson plans, animations, and videos.



## Headteacher, Karen MacKechnie:

“From a Curriculum for Excellence point of view, it fits perfectly with what we’re trying to do. Skills development has to be there alongside literacy and numeracy. Employers want vocational skills, and it’s vital we start building those at primary level.”

## What Happened in Practice

- Pupils quickly engaged – even those who usually shy away from challenges
- Teachers used the award’s language of skills in other lessons, and pupils did too
- Quieter pupils found their voice, and their more outgoing peers began inviting others to contribute
- Organisation improved – even desk tidiness!
- Children worked outside their usual friendship groups
- Teachers described delivery as “pick up and go” – no extra resources, minimal prep

## Impact on Pupils

100% of the 45 pupils said they had improved in all five skills. They recorded their progress in a Learner Passport, alongside reflections and a certificate they can keep.

Examples of impact:

- A pupil who only planned to join the ensemble for the school show gained the confidence to audition for – and win – a main role.
- Pupils confidently led the Daffodil Tea fundraiser, raising £720 and bringing the community together.
- Children felt able to join new clubs and take on challenges outside of school, some of them crediting the award with increasing their confidence when it came to competing in their chosen sport

### Kirklandneuk Pupils:

“I feel I can give anything a shot.”

“I’m more confident than I thought I was.”



## Impact on Staff

Teachers noticed pupils:

- Staying engaged even when activities were hard
- Recognising and naming skills they were using
- Showing leadership in everyday classroom situations

The award also gave the school a clear way to evidence Meta Skills in action.



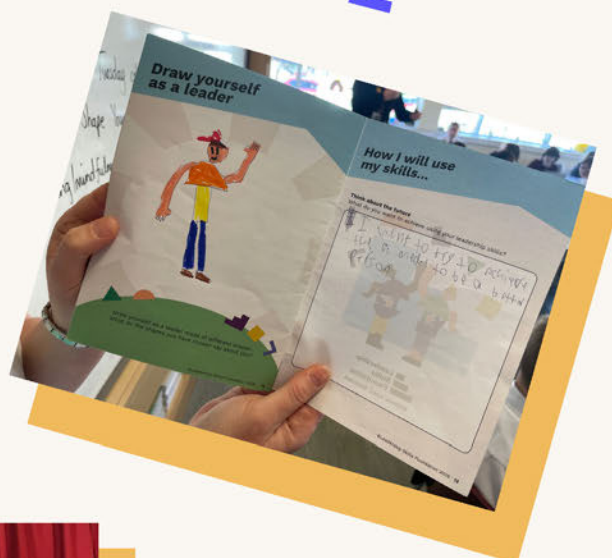
## What's Next for Kirklandneuk

In 2025/26, all three P5 classes will take part, starting earlier in the year so the Daffodil Tea can be their leadership challenge. P4 pupils will be introduced to the award's skills language in preparation for P5. The headteacher plans to encourage neighbouring primary schools to join in.

## Why Consider the Shape Your Skills Award?

For over 40 years, the Leadership Skills Foundation has helped schools develop and recognise leadership skills. The Shape Your Skills Award was created with primary teachers to give younger learners the confidence, language, and evidence of skills they can carry into secondary school and beyond.

Find out more at [shapeyourskills.org](https://shapeyourskills.org) or email: [sysa@leadershipskillsfoundation.org](mailto:sysa@leadershipskillsfoundation.org)



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