

Nottingham High School



Founded in 1513 Nottingham High is an independent co-educational school for students age 4-18. It is rated 'excellent' by ISI.



Skills development

Rebecca Auterson Head of Careers discusses:

If there is one thing the pandemic has highlighted, it is that education has a much wider remit than simply delivering academic qualifications. Schools do much more than train students to pass GCSEs and A-levels. Teachers do not merely deliver a curriculum, the material for which could easily be found in a book or website. But what exactly are the extras that education delivers?

I am guessing, like me, you would find it hard to create a comprehensive list. Even if you could define all the other skills young people learn as they grow up, how would you show that these are skills learned only at school? Extra-curricular activities, hobbies, families and communities all play their part.

If, as employers assure us, soft skills are just as important as academic qualifications, it seems

short-sighted that our education system waves students off from school with paperwork that shows only how they have performed academically.

As long as this remains the case, students themselves will continue to believe that academic qualifications are 'the point' of school. How can we prove to students that soft skills are truly valued throughout life if we do not provide tangible evidence to them during their time at school?

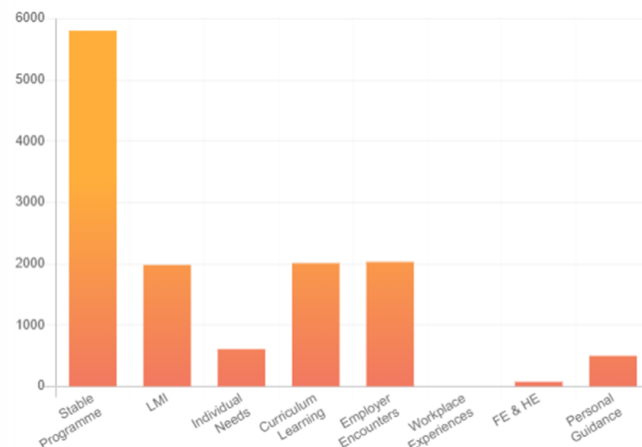
Morrisby Tracker & Skills Builder

In trying to get the 'soft skills' message out, we have been making full use of the new Tracker feature in the Morrisby software. Morrisby have partnered with Skills Builder to embed 8 key employability skills into the system. Each skill is broken down into 16 steps, so students can understand how the activities they do relate to the development of these skills. Some of the activities we have logged on their accounts include:

- Participation in music groups such as school bands, choirs and orchestras (listening, teamwork, aiming high, creativity and, for some, leadership).
- Participation in sports teams (listening, teamwork, staying positive, aiming high, creativity and, for some, leadership).
- Young Enterprise (all 8 skills and at a high level, since the students taking part must set up and run their own business).
- Our own Virtual Careers Week and other careers talks/events (listening).
- Individual curriculum activities such as Geography field trips, classics projects (various skills and levels depending on the year group and task).
- Other awards, competitions, olympiads etc (aiming high).

Gatsby Benchmarks

Time Spent



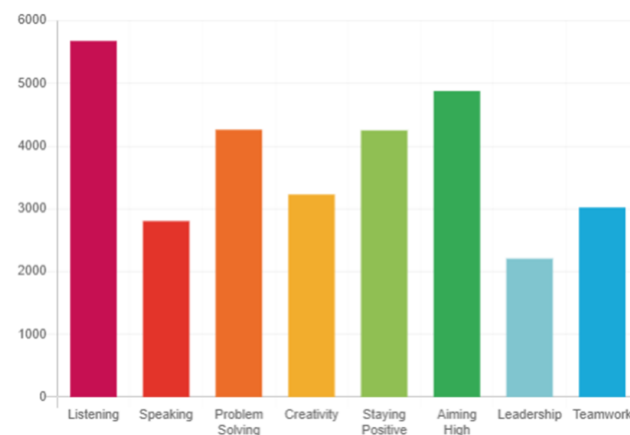
Setting up Tracker has involved regular discussions with Heads of Departments to understand the best examples for showcasing skills in the curriculum for each year group. Combined Cadet Force leaders, plus Music and Sports departments have also been generous in sharing their time to add activities in the students' profiles. Importantly, all our teaching staff have undertaken a CPD session covering all aspects of the Morrisby software. There is now a good level of awareness and regular opportunities within tutor sessions to update and reflect on progress in developing soft skills. All teachers can view the students' accounts and provide support where they see it is needed. Teachers can also add their own activities to Tracker and of course, students are encouraged to include the activities they take part in outside of school and to create goals and action plans for further development.



One of the aspects I like most about the Skills Builder framework is its simplicity. With a manageable 8 skills to track, students can quickly identify those they are already practised in and those where they want to develop their skills further. I can also easily see where there are gaps and then support the school to create new opportunities for the students. Getting the system up and running in the pandemic has highlighted, for example, how few opportunities there have been to develop 'speaking' skills this year. Our

Essential Skills

Time Spent



careers events have involved listening to speakers online rather than engaging in active discussion, school plays have not happened, sports fixtures have had to be cancelled and so on. Conversely, I think all the students who make it to the end of the summer term with some enthusiasm for further education will get a big tick in the 'staying positive' box!

So, while we are only at the beginning of the journey, we are starting to be able to measure these unmeasurable soft skills. This in turn has made it easier to report more widely to the school community on the impact of our careers programme. Each activity we track is linked to the Gatsby benchmarks, so there is a clear record of where we are succeeding; for example, the obvious gap in 'Workplace Experiences' will (hopefully) diminish as the pandemic recedes.

"As students develop a deeper understanding of what soft skills are, their importance and lifetime relevance, it will become natural to explore them more widely and consider other skills that are worth developing. Morrisby will be a core part of this process."

Rebecca Auterson - Head of Careers

Key Facts

- ✓ Morrisby Tracker
- ✓ Recording activities and skills
- ✓ Part of whole-school programme
- ✓ SkillsBuilder framework and language