



# A speech by The Duke of Cambridge to launch the SkillForce Prince William Award

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Ben, thank you. I think you've said it all - about what incredible work SkillForce does, why character education for young people matters and what this award is aiming to achieve. I hope you can all see from Ben's overview why, as Royal Patron, I am so passionate about SkillForce and so proud to be here today to launch this awards programme that bears my name.

I believe that an individual's academic success, wellbeing and mental health depends not only on traditional qualifications, but on nurturing non-academic attributes like self-confidence, discipline and determination. It is not enough that someone is good at English and Maths if they cannot withstand the pressures that life throws up.

The ability for a child to develop character, courage and resilience to overcome setbacks is something about which I care deeply. Over the years I have seen, time and again, how the development of personal skills puts a young person in better stead for education, future employment and for life.

The Prince William Award aims to do just this - to develop children's personal skills and equip children with resilience. It is why I am so pleased that this idea - many years in development - is finally seeing fruition. The Prince William Award dares six to fourteen year olds to be their best selves - to gain habits at an early stage of their life that will equip them for the rest of their childhood and adult lives.

The scheme is the first of its kind to target younger children from the age of six. It includes both practical and reflective learning - combining outdoor activities, like the command tasks I took part in today, with classroom based review; and crucially, it is delivered using the knowledge, skills and expertise of some of the most positive role models in our society - former Service personnel, who exemplify the virtues of courage and determination.

As Ben explained, The Prince William Award has been developed in consultation with academics and education experts and has been tried and tested in 37 pilot schools, where teachers have noted significant improvements in pupils' confidence, communication and their ability to work with others. The scheme will move beyond the pilot stage to launch across the country this September.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Standard Life and the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues for their generous support of the award and thank all of you here today for helping us to launch this 'national first'.

Finally, thank you to the Pioneers at Bishopstone Church of England Primary School; to the Explorers at Llanfoist Fawr Primary School and to the Trailblazers at Caldicot. You are some of the very first young people in the country to take part in the Prince William Award. Many Congratulations.

And in honour of this, I am delighted to present a commemorative trophy to each school for attending today. Diolch yn fawr.