



Young Enterprise

Member of JA Worldwide

- FINANCIAL CAPABILITY
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- WORK READINESS



Young Enterprise Case Study

Essential Fidgets, Daubeney Academy 2026

Essential Fidgets is a student-led company formed by **five Year 10 students at Daubeney Academy in Bedford**: Jaiden, Timothy, Dayyan, Arman, and Robert. Their journey through the Young Enterprise programme represents a powerful example of how targeted support, practical learning, and belief in young people can lead to exceptional personal and academic transformation.

The group's starting point was far from straightforward. All five students come from underserved communities and had experienced significant challenges in school. With multiple school suspensions between them, the boys were, in their own words, *"one poor decision away from permanent exclusion."* Instead of letting those difficulties define them, they channelled their experiences directly into their business, creating a product born from real, lived adversity.

"We started nearly four months later than everyone else, but we didn't let that stop us. Today we are standing here in the finals, not as a team, but as proof. **With the right support, belief and opportunity, people can change their path.**"

The Business Concept

The idea for Essential Fidgets was born from honest and personal reflection. The students openly discussed their own experiences with anxiety, frustration, and the ways they had previously coped—often through disengagement or negative behaviours. From this, they identified a key problem: many young people, such as those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) struggle to manage emotions constructively.

In response, they developed a series of discreet, anxiety-management fidget tools, designed to help **young people regulate emotions without drawing attention.**



Tactile fidgets are perfect for those who'd love to feel different sensations; quiet fidgets are ideal for classrooms and offices, offering discreet ways to focus. For those who need more active hands, movement fidgets include things like finger games or small puzzle fidgets.

Despite joining the Young Enterprise programme later than most competing teams, Essential Fidgets demonstrated **exceptional resilience and determination**. They quickly organised themselves, allocated roles, and immersed themselves in all aspects of running a business, including product design, budgeting, marketing, and sales.

Their efforts culminated in a remarkable achievement: **progression to the National Finals in Cardiff** in June 2026, where they competed against the top 20 teams from over 1,000 schools and 10,000 students across the UK.



Essential Fidgets team meeting YE CEO Sarah Porretta at the UK Final

In Daubeney Academy's first-ever year participating in Young Enterprise, Essential Fidgets achieved extraordinary success:

- National Aspire Award
- Overall Area Winners
- Best Marketing Award
- Trade Stand Area Winners

Reaching the National Finals on a debut entry is an **exceptionally rare accomplishment**, highlighting the team's capability and the effectiveness of the support structures around them.

Confidence and Personal Growth

One of the most profound outcomes was the growth in confidence. Students who were once hesitant to speak publicly became capable of presenting to external judges and engaging with professionals.

In the team's words: **"The key thing to remember is that every person with SEND is unique, incredibly capable, and absolutely amazing.** They just sometimes need different support to shine their brightest."

Tactile, active and movement fidgets make up the Product Range



Wider Impact and Recognition

The transformation observed by staff has been profound. Teachers noted a marked **improvement in behaviour, discipline, and commitment to learning**. Students who were once disengaged are now recognised as role models, demonstrating leadership, maturity, and responsibility.

In the team's words: *"what makes our journey different is the people around us, our teachers, our families and our school. Daubeney Academy never gave up on us. They gave us our opportunity of our alternative curriculum and for the first time, education started to feel like something we could succeed in."*

Staff across the academy have expressed immense **pride in the students' achievements**, describing their journey as evidence of what can be accomplished when young people are given the right opportunities and support.

The Essential Fidgets case study is a powerful demonstration of **transformation through education, enterprise, and belief**. These five young men began the year at risk of exclusion; they now stand as national finalists, award winners, and ambassadors for their school.

Their journey highlights the life-changing impact of combining alternative education pathways with real-world learning experiences.

To learn more about how Company Programme can benefit young people or how to support Young Enterprise, please contact Philanthropy@y-e.org.uk or call 020 7549 1980

