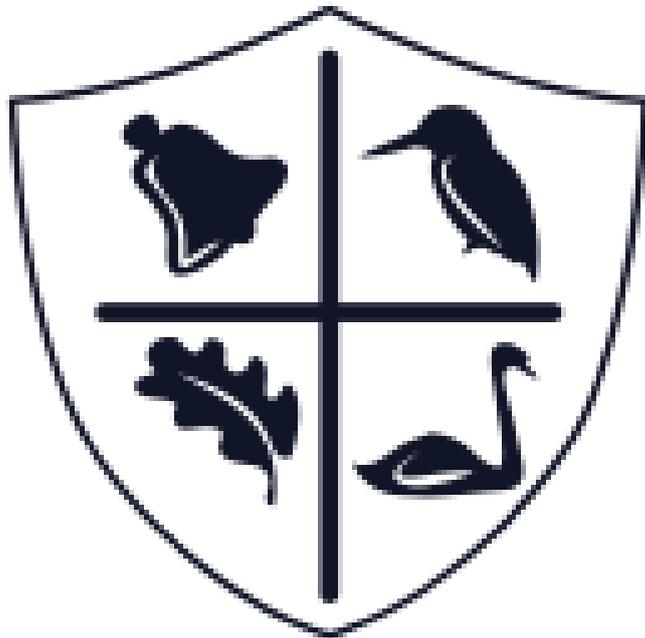


The Three Schools



How to help your child
develop a Growth Mindset

Fixed or Growth Mindset?

This year, we are encouraging pupils to develop a Growth Mindset. It is worth emphasising from the outset that a Growth Mindset is not a new curriculum but simply an approach to learning in school and life beyond. Research by Developmental Psychologist Dr Carol Dweck of Stanford University points to people having one of two mindsets: Growth and Fixed. A child's belief about intelligence is an important factor in whether they become an effective learner. We all hold beliefs about concepts such as 'intelligence', 'ability' and 'personality', with roughly half of us holding a '**fixed**' mindset and the other half a '**growth**' mindset.

"In a fixed mindset students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents, are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that's that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset students understand their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence. They don't necessarily think everyone's the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it"

Dweck

Although most people will undoubtedly have a mixture of these mindsets in different aspects of their life, Dweck's research highlights very important evidence that most teaching professionals would instantly recognise in their class. From a practical point of view, staff would recognise children with a fixed mindset who are scared to contribute to class discussion for fear of looking stupid; who take one bad test result as a sign that they cannot do the subject, are going to fail and therefore give up; who will not try anything new for fear of getting it wrong; who will persevere with the same approach to their learning even when it is not working rather than being creative and finding a different solution. Developing a Growth Mindset is designed to remove such barriers to learning as the children realise they can grow their ability rather than being told they can.

However, it's not all about Dr Dweck. The schools will be taking the advice this learning academic gives, mixing it with further academic research and making it suit The Three Schools, Local Authority and National policies, and how we think it will best benefit The Three Schools' children.

As you can imagine, a key part of developing such a mindset is in hearing a consistent message from everyone involved. Staff across the schools will be using techniques to encourage children to think this way but it is important that the message is heard at home as well. Throughout this booklet, therefore, you will find some handy advice on Growth Mindset and how to help your son or daughter consolidate the idea and go onto ever greater success.

Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
<p>Beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence and ability are fixed • Nature determines intelligence and ability • I have an innate ability for some things and an innate disability for other things • I will always be good at, for example, Maths, and always be poor at, for example, Art 	<p>Beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intelligence and ability can grow • Nurture determines intelligence and ability • If I apply myself more, seek help, take risks, change my strategy, then I've got a good chance of learning anything and thus growing my intelligence and talent.
<p>Priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prove myself • To succeed, especially with little effort, as this proves that I am clever and/or able • Avoid failure of any sort, as this proves I have low ability levels 	<p>Priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve myself • To learn through challenge, as this will help me to grow my talents • Seek interesting challenges that will stretch and help me learn
<p>Attitude to Challenging Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges should be avoided • Difficulties will mean I am not as clever as I thought • Failure means I'm stupid or incapable 	<p>Attitude to Challenging Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges will help me learn • Difficulties are an inevitable part of the learning process • Failure means I need to adapt my strategies
<p>I apply myself when there is.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity to show off my strengths • A good chance of getting everything right • Very little risk of failure 	<p>I apply myself when there is.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity to learn more insights or skills. • Enough challenge to stretch me • An opportunity to try something new
<p>Response to challenge or failure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blame myself or, to protect my ego, someone else • Feel inferior or incapable • Trying guessing the answers or copy others • Seek ego-boosting distractions 	<p>Response to challenge or failure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no blame – I just want to know how to do it better next time • Feel inspired to have a go • Try various problem-solving strategies • Seek advice, support or new strategies
<p>Mottos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either you're good at something or you're not • If you're really good at something, you shouldn't need to try • If you have to try, you must be stupid • Don't try too hard; that way you've got an excuse if things go wrong ☐ No pain, no pain! 	<p>Mottos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Success comes with application • No matter how good you are at something, you can always improve • If you have to try, you must be learning • Always try hard; that way you've more chance of more success ☐ No pain, no gain!

How praise can help to develop a Growth Mindset

As a staff, we will be aiming to praise children's effort, process and commitment rather than talent or intelligence. Phrases and approaches that staff at The Three Schools will be aiming to use are:

- "You really worked well to prepare for that assessment and your improvement shows it"
- "I like the way you tried different strategies until you finally got it. You thought of different ways until you got it to work"
- "I like the way you took on that project. It took a lot of work doing research, thinking about layout before carrying it out. You're going to learn a lot of things from this which you can use again in the future"
- "I know you used to find school work easy and worry that bits are difficult now. But, the truth is you weren't using your brain to its full power. I'm really excited that you're stretching yourself now and working to learn hard things"
- "That homework was really challenging and long. I admire the way you went about finishing it"
- That work is really good. Tell me about it and how you did it"
- "How did you feel when you completed that challenging piece of work?"
- "I like the effort you put into that piece of work, but let's work together some more and see if we can work out what you didn't understand"
- "We all have different learning curves. It may take more time for you to catch up on this and be comfortable with this material but if you keep working hard at it, you will"
- "Everyone learns in different ways. Let's keep trying to find the way that works for you".

Staff will be trying to avoid praise like “You did that so quickly” or “Look, you didn’t make any mistakes!” This can send the message that speed and perfection are what is prized most. However, speed and perfection can be the enemy of difficult learning. Children can think, “If you believe I’m smart when I’m fast and perfect, I’d better not take on anything challenging” when in fact some of the best learning comes from learning from mistakes and the process of how to develop from there.

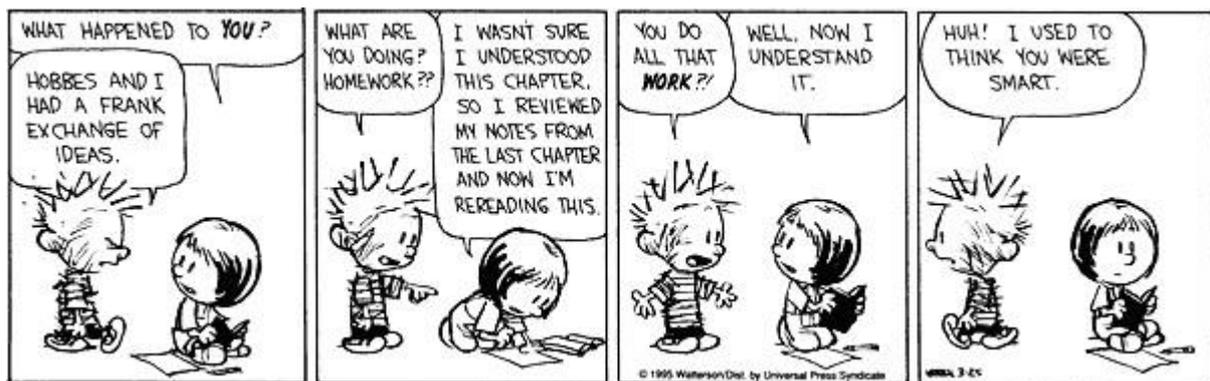
Praise which encourages a fixed mindset	Praise which encourages a growth mindset
You’re a great writer / footballer / artist	It really shows when you work hard at your writing / football / painting
We are so proud that you got X marks	The effort you put in makes us so proud
I’m not sure it was worth all that effort	You tried so hard – I can see that
That took you ages	That was a struggle for you and you kept going – well done
What a shame you only got 15/20	Let’s look at those mistakes – they’re a real chance to learn
You did that so easily – what a bright spark you are	You did that so easily – maybe it wasn’t enough of a challenge
You’re not a natural swimmer	You can’t swim yet, but if you keep trying, you’ll get there
You’re really talented	Your commitment and practice have paid off
Don’t worry I was never good at Maths at school	I found Maths tricky at school but I needed to keep going and learn from my mistakes

Phrases staff will be trying to avoid

Children love praise. They especially love praise about their intelligence and talent. It really gives them a boost and a special feeling... but only for a short time. The minute they hit a snag, their confidence can be destroyed and motivation hits rock bottom. If success means they are smart, then failure can mean they are dumb.

Children often worry about failure in school, and feel doing poorly in one piece of work means they simply cannot and will never be able to do something. The message to them is that they may not be able to do it YET.

So does this mean staff will not praise the children? Not at all. It just means that we need to try and stay away from certain kinds of praise that only focus on intelligence and talent rather than effort.



Five quick things you can do to help develop a Growth Mindset in your child:

1. Ask open-ended questions to solve a problem or achieve a goal. “What do you think will happen if....” or “Why do you suppose....”. These questions build logical thinking skills and often lead to rich discovery.

2. Use specific feedback that identifies what the child accomplished. We all use phrases like “You’re brilliant”, “you made that look so easy”, “you’re so clever”, but praise like this doesn’t tell your child what they have done well – these comments just reinforce a fixed mindset in your child. Instead, praise what they have done specifically – “you sounded that work out really carefully and used your phonics – well done”, “I like how you kept going at swimming and tried to get all the way to the other side”

3. Encourage children to take a risk

Watch and listen to your child so you can take cues about what else they are ready to tackle. Vygotsky calls this the “zone of proximal development” – when we gently nudge children to use what they know to try something just a bit out of their reach, but yet developmentally appropriate. By offering small but achievable challenges, confidence and persistence emerge.

4. Be persistent and growth-orientated yourself

Narrate your thoughts as you try something new or frustrating (with a PG rating, of course!). Your child may even be able to offer some helpful tips. This allows children to see we all have to work hard to solve problems and we all continue to learn new things. Try to avoid labelling yourself in a fixed mindset way – telling your child “oh I’m rubbish at Maths” gives them the message that you are either good at Maths or not good at Maths and there is nothing you can do about it. A more growth mindset comment would be “Oh I found Maths tricky at school but if you keep trying and learning from your mistakes, you’ll get there”.

5. Don’t worry about the small stuff

Accidents and mistakes happen. Show your child there is something to be learned when we don’t achieve what we set out to accomplish. Maybe someone else lends a hand. Maybe you return to the task at another time. Maybe it is best to take a break for a while, or split a task up into smaller steps. Be specific about what worked, identify the emotions involved, and offer encouragement for the next time.

Helping your child to develop a growth mindset

The effort you put in makes us so proud.

You tried so hard – I can see that.

That was a struggle for you and you kept going – well done.

Let's go back over the words that you found difficult – they're a real chance to learn

You did that so easily – maybe it wasn't enough of a challenge

Your commitment and practice have paid off

I found learning to read tricky at school but I needed to keep going and learnt from my mistakes

What can you do if you don't know what this word says?

Are there any clues that can help you work it out?

Let's see if we can get to the end of this page.

What will you be able to do when you can read fluently?

Praise effort, persistence, strategies, seeking challenges, setting goals, planning, using creative ways of solving problems

“If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning” – Carol Dweck