

Growth Mindset



Information for parents

Over the last year we have been working with the children on what it means to have a Growth Mindset. The children have learnt much more about how their brains work and have found out about famous and influential people who have succeeded due to having a growth mindset and not giving up on their goal. We have also had PSHE lessons and assemblies about having a growth mindset. This year we will be moving things on a bit further by asking children to apply their understanding of Growth Mindset to their learning.

What is Growth Mindset?

Mindsets are beliefs about yourself and your basic qualities such as your intelligence, your talents and your personality.

People with a fixed mindset believe that their traits are just part of them. They believe that their talent alone creates success without effort and they are reluctant to take on challenges.

People with a growth mindset, on the other hand, see their traits as just the starting point and that these can be developed by dedication, hard work and effort. This view creates resilience and a love of learning.

What is Growth Mindset? https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KUWn_TJTrnU

In Our school

We are helping the children to understand that the more you challenge yourself, the harder you work and the more you practise then the better at something you will get.

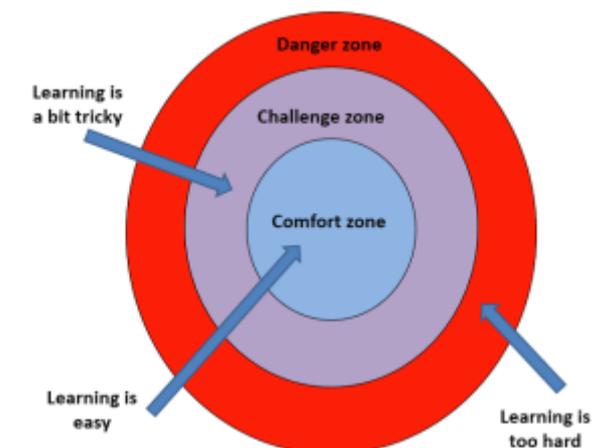
Essentially - **Practise, Persevere and (be) Positive.**

Putting this into practice means that we are teaching the children to understand themselves as learners, what they can do already and what they need to do next. There is a subtle but significant shift from the teacher being responsible for learning to the child taking responsibility for themselves.

We want the children to understand that it is okay to be stuck, and that some of their best learning is done when they find things the hardest. It is also okay to make mistakes, we all learn far more from our mistakes than our successes and mistakes are inevitable when you challenge yourself. Rather than simply praising success we are praising effort and persistence.

INSTEAD OF.....	TRY THINKING....
I'm not good at this	What am I missing?
I give up	I'll use a different strategy
It's good enough	Is this really my best work?
I can't make this any better	I can always improve
This is too hard	This may take some time
I made a mistake	Mistakes help me to learn
I just can't do this	I am going to train my brain
I'll never be that smart	I will learn how to do this
Plan A didn't work	There's always Plan B
My friend can do it	I will learn from them

You may hear your child talking about the learning zones we have introduced. We want the children to recognise when they have chosen activities that are too hard or too easy for them and that they learn best in the challenge or Purple Zone.



This approach links with how we mark work and give feedback too, praising effort in rising to a challenge, taking the risk of making a mistake and accepting that they might not be able to do something yet.

Our learning Journey

This is as much a learning journey for the teachers and staff as it is for the children. We know that the children achieve well in this school but we also know that we have a long way to go in mentoring children in taking responsibility for themselves and their learning. There is much more for us to learn as we fully engage with Growth Mindset - I will keep you updated on our progress!

How you can help at home

- Praise the amount of effort your child is putting into things rather than how clever they are;

- Talk to your children about their brain being like a muscle - the more they use it, the stronger it gets;
- Encourage your children to not give up if they are finding something difficult;
- Challenge your children to try something new or challenging.
- Tips for Parents <https://www.oxfordlearning.com/growth-mindset-tips-for-parents/>

This is a scenario which is on several Growth Mindset websites that you might like to discuss with your child.

What would you say to Libby?

Nine-year-old Libby was on her way to her first gymnastics competition. She was a little nervous about competing but she was good at gymnastics, really loved it and felt confident about doing well. She had even thought about the perfect place in her room to place the trophy she would win.

In the first event, the floor exercises, Libby went first. Although she did a good job, after the next few girls had performed she slid down the scoring table. Libby also did well in the other events, but not well enough to win. By the end of the evening, she had received no trophies and was devastated.

What would you do if you were Libby's parents?

1. Tell Libby that you thought she was the best.
2. Tell her she was robbed of a trophy that was rightfully hers.
3. Re-assure her that gymnastics is not that important.
4. Tell her that she has the ability and will surely win next time
5. Tell her that she didn't deserve to win.

There is a strong message in our society about how to boost children's self-esteem, and a main part of that message is: Protect them from failure! While this may help with the immediate problem of the child's disappointment, it can be harmful in the long run. Why?

If we consider the five possible reactions from a mindset point of view:

The first (you thought she was the best) is insincere. She was not the best – you know it, and she does too. This offers her no recipe for how to recover, or how to improve.

The second (she was robbed) places blame on others, when in fact the problem was mostly with her performance, not the judges. Do you want her to grow up blaming others for her deficiencies?

The third (reassure her that gymnastics doesn't really matter) teaches her to devalue something if she doesn't do well in it right away.

The fourth (she has the ability) may be the most dangerous message of all. Does ability automatically take you where you want to go? If Libby didn't win this competition, why should she win the next one?

The last opinion (tell her that she didn't deserve to win) seems hard-hearted under the circumstances. You wouldn't quite say it that way. However, that's largely what her growth-minded father told her.

Here's what he actually said: "Libby, I know how you feel. It's so disappointing to have your hopes up and to perform your best but not to win. But you know, you haven't really earned it yet. There were many girls there who have been in gymnastics longer than you and who've worked a lot harder than you. If this is something you really want, then it's

something you'll really have to work for." He also let Libby know that if she wanted to do gymnastics purely for fun, that was just fine. But if she wanted to excel in the competitions, more was required and that she should ask her coaches for guidance.

Libby took this to heart, spending much more time repeating and perfecting her routines, especially the ones she was weakest in. At the next meeting there were eighty girls from all over the area. Libby won five medals for the individual events and was the overall champion of the competition, for which she received a large trophy. In essence, her father had not only told her the truth, but also taught her how to learn from her failures, to do what it takes to succeed in the future and where to seek help to improve. He sympathised deeply with her disappointment, but he did not give her a phoney boost that would only lead to further disappointment.