

What is a Growth Mindset?

When students and teachers have a growth mindset they understand that intelligence can be developed. Students focus on improvements instead of worrying about how smart they are. They work hard to learn more and get smarter. Years of research has shown that children with a growth mindset have greater motivation in school, do better academically and are happier.

This is a key concept which we are working with this year to facilitate all children to have a 'can do' attitude towards learning. We are teaching them a really important word - YET. Just because a student can't do something now doesn't mean they won't be able to do it in the future - they just can't do it YET. In order to ensure that we are encouraging effort and persistence, we are thinking very carefully about our praise, feedback and marking. Rather than simply praising success we are working on praising effort and persistence.

We believe the best thing to do is to teach children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort and keep on learning. We know that we will have been successful when our children recognise that effort, persistence and good learning habits are what will help them to improve. If children have fixed mindsets they find it hard to cope with failure: we teach our children to see mistakes and failure as positive.

A quote from Carol Dweck

(Professor of Psychology at Stanford University—author of *Mindset: How you can fulfil your potential*) :

"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 that 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."

This is important because (1) individuals with a "growth" theory are more likely to continue working hard despite setbacks and (2) individuals' theories of intelligence can be affected by subtle environmental cues. For example, children given praise such as "good job, you're very smart" are much more likely to develop a fixed mindset, whereas if given compliments like "good job, you worked very hard" they are likely to develop a growth mindset. In other words, it is possible to encourage students, for example, to persist despite failure by encouraging them to think about learning in a certain way."

Benefits of the Growth Mindset:

- ◆ it helps everyone; pupils, staff and parents to become better learners, raises achievement for all and for groups of students
- ◆ it creates a culture of aspiration, determination and resilience
- ◆ boosts motivation and achievement
- ◆ it narrows the gender gap in Maths - showing the girls that they can achieve equally well as boys
- ◆ it improves Resilience, Behaviour and Achievement
- ◆ Children are more likely to have a go because they understand that intelligence isn't something that you are born with, it is something that is developed and achieved through effort.

Think of some brilliant people - now think about their route to becoming brilliant. Did this happen overnight or because they worked really, really hard at it?

Want to find out more about how Windmills is using this approach?

Come to our parent's workshop on Tuesday, 13th October, 7pm

