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Growth Mindset

Dear Parents,

From September 2016 we have been encouraging pupils to develop a Growth Mindset. It is worth emphasising that a Growth Mindset is not a new course but an approach to school and lifelong learning. Research by Developmental Psychologist Dr Carol Dweck of Stanford University points to people having one of two mindsets: Growth and Fixed.

"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."

Dweck

A child's belief about intelligence is an important factor in whether they become an effective learner so being open to their potential for growth is important for success. 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 pupils 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. The school's goal of developing a Growth Mindset within pupils is designed to remove such barriers to learning as the youngsters will begin to understand, accept and believe they can grow their ability rather than being *told* they can by parents and teachers.

Research suggests that the best methods to allow youngsters to believe in their ability to grow are as follows.

Being open and frank about growth. i.e. making everyone aware of what they can achieve by adopting the mindset.

Using feedback and praise designed to promote and highlight their ability to grow through effort, planning and commitment.



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Showing pupils that their brain and body can physically achieve more through training and effort.

Giving clear and inspirational examples of others who have used their Growth Mindset to great effect.

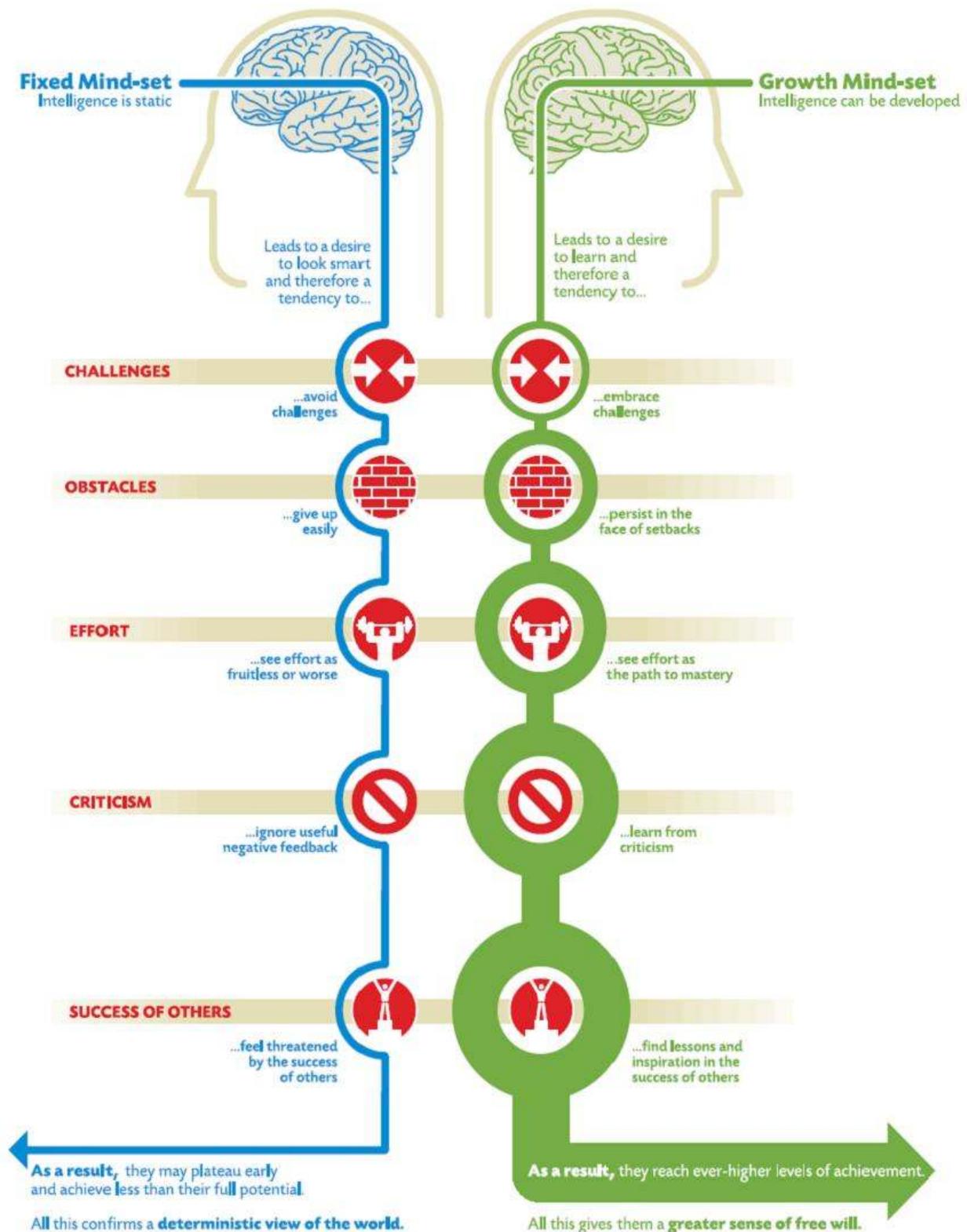
The opportunity for pupils to think about and write about their mindset.

As you can imagine, hearing a consistent message in this approach is crucial to success therefore, staff in the school will be adopting these methods as often as possible. However, it is important that the same message is heard at home so we would encourage parents to try to engage their children with these themes.

A fuller booklet is attached and is also available on the school web site should you wish more details.

Yours sincerely

Sian Mitchell



GRAPHIC BY NIGEL HOLMES

Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard

<http://www.centreforconfidence.co.uk/>

<http://mindsetonline.com/>

<http://www.mindsetworks.com/>

Dr Carol Dweck's, "Mindset: How you can fulfil your potential" is available in most book shops and online. Chapters 1, 2, 7 and 8 are most suited to youngsters' development.