

# Brundall Primary School



## Growth Mindset Policy

This policy was reviewed and approved March 1st 2021

This policy is due for review in January 25th 2023

A quote from Carol Dweck:

*"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."*

**Aim:**

This policy aims to ensure a consistency of approach across the school in order to promote a growth mindset culture through language, modelling, behaviour and curriculum. This includes the teaching, learning and assessment of learning attitudes to help learners think about their own learning more explicitly. This meta-cognitive approach teaches pupils specific strategies to set goals, and think about and evaluate their own progress and development.

**Environment:**

Each class creates an environment in which the differences between a fixed and growth mindset are in evidence and can easily be referred to.

**What is the difference between a Fixed and Growth Mindset?**

<b>Fixed Mindset</b>	<b>Growth Mindset</b>
<b>Intelligence is static.</b>	<b>Intelligence can be developed.</b>
Leads to a desire to <i>look smart</i> and therefore a tendency to	Leads to a desire to <i>learn</i> and therefore a tendency to
<b>• avoid challenges</b>	<b>• embrace challenges</b>
<b>• give up easily due to obstacles</b>	<b>• persist despite obstacles</b>
<b>• see effort as fruitless</b>	<b>• see effort as path to mastery</b>
<b>• ignore useful feedback</b>	<b>• learn from criticism</b>
<b>• be threatened by others' success</b>	<b>• be inspired by others' success</b>

## Language, marking and feedback:

The word “work” contains no explicit connection to education and learning. At Brundall Primary School we change the word “work” for words such as learning, discovery, exploration and play.

We give specific praise for persistence, effort, thinking and resilience rather than “being clever”. Wherever possible, praise describes the effort, skill, process or attitude, not the person.

We are also aware that most of us are a mixture of fixed and growth mindsets and we are all on a journey towards a growth mindset.

## HOW TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS

### Growth Mindset

What to say:

“When you learn how to do a new kind of problem, it grows your math brain!”

“If you catch yourself saying, ‘I’m not a math person,’ just add the word ‘yet’ to the end of the sentence.”

“That feeling of math being hard is the feeling of your brain growing.”

“The point isn’t to get it all right away. The point is to grow your understanding step by step. What can you try next?”

### Fixed Mindset

What not to say:

“Not everybody is good at math. Just do your best.”

“That’s OK, maybe math is not one of your strengths.”

“Don’t worry, you’ll get it if you keep trying.”\*

\*If students are using the wrong strategies, their efforts might not work. Plus they may feel particularly inept if their efforts are fruitless.

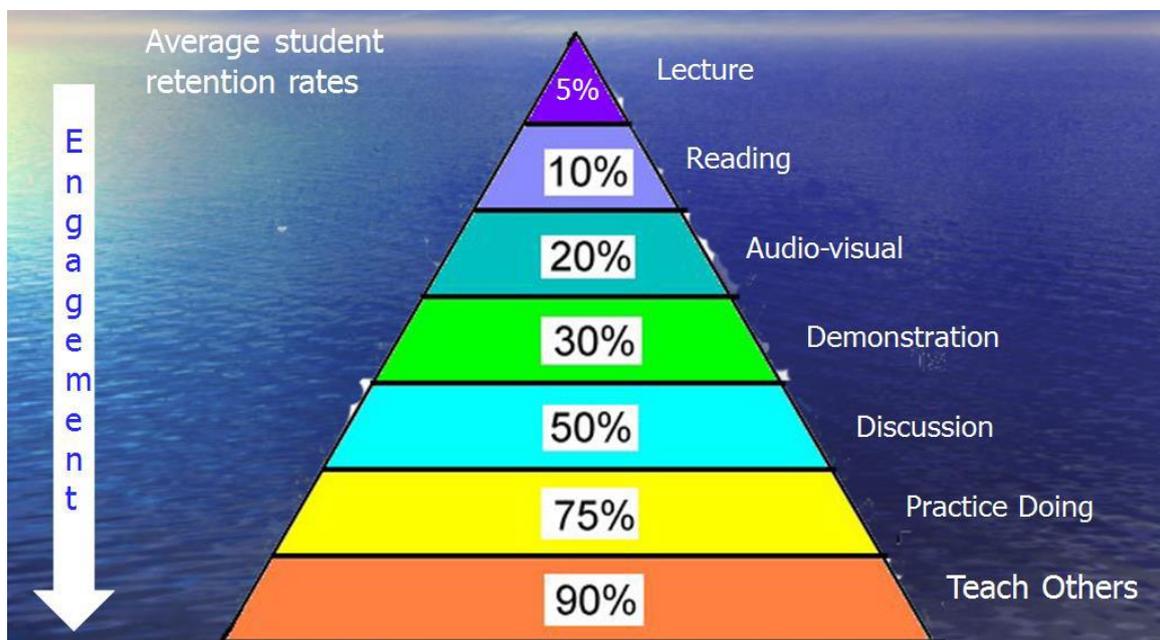
“Great effort! You tried your best!”\*

\*Don’t accept less than optimal performance from your students.

This approach links with how we mark work and give feedback. We mark giving next steps in learning and mistakes and feedback are seen as a way to learn.

## Organisation:

When children are placed in a “lower ability” or “middle ability” group, this can encourage the teacher and child to have lower expectations. Children are often aware of where they are in relation to the rest of the class and therefore will vary their aspirations accordingly, thus undermining their learning capacity. Their access to higher order thinking, language and activities can potentially be limited by this approach. At Brundall Primary School we keep groupings flexible. Children work in mixed pairings and small groupings. All classes have Talking Partners which are changed regularly and ensure that children are discussing together and cooperatively improving each other’s learning. Success criteria for how to be successful Talking Partners are co-constructed in class. Talking Partners are encouraged to listen carefully and can expect to be asked what their Talking Partner is thinking, rather than their own answers. Children understand that being able to explain learning to a peer will enhance their own learning.



## Teaching approaches:

At Brundall Primary School all children’s learning and efforts are valued. A visualiser is used to share children’s learning and a culture is encouraged where children feel proud of their learning and see that making mistakes or making improvement is valued.

When appropriate, toy animals can represent a fixed and growth mindset. Children can then relate to the characteristics of each animal. (Deema Duck: Don’t give up! Hamed Hedgehog: Have a go! Isabel Iguana: Use your imagination!)

Children are encouraged to be active learners and take responsibility for making progress. Some children talk about their zone of proximal development when talking about where they are in their learning – using terms such as comfort zone, stretch zone and stress zone or the ‘pit of despair’.

We encourage a culture where mistakes are celebrated because mistakes are necessary for learning. People with fixed mindsets find it hard to cope with failure: we teach our children to see mistakes

and failure as positive learning opportunities. Mistakes can be known as **marvellous mistakes** and can be used to identify misconceptions. People with a growth mindset see failure not as a negative, undermining judgement on them as people, but as something they can learn from so that they can succeed in the future.

Appropriate, targeted adult support can have significant impact on learning. However, if not managed reflectively, it can also have a significant impact on attitudes towards oneself as a learner, and on independent learning. Children can become “TA” dependent. At Brundall Primary School, support staff support **all** children. Both teachers **and** support staff promote independence. Staff are aware of the most recent research about effectiveness of TAs and how to maximize effective teaching and learning.

Rewards are used at Brundall Primary School for a wide range of reasons such as promoting good behaviour and to recognize achievement and effort. Celebration assemblies provide an opportunity for children to be rewarded for showing behaviours which represent growth mindsets.

At Brundall Primary School children learn that their brain can be developed like a muscle which can change and grow stronger the more it is used. Children know that with time, effort, practice and input they can develop and learn. Teachers know that with time, effort, practice and input, **ALL** children can achieve.

We work with parents to be clear about what we mean by a growth mindset and how we promote it at school and how they can support it at home. All parents are given a leaflet as a guide to the promotion of growth mindset.