

Developing a

Milver-Mindset Culture

**Milver-Mindset**

For many years, Milverton Primary School has adopted a ‘Growth Mindset’, or as we now term it a 'Milver-Mindset', philosophy. We would like this approach to apply to everyday tasks and activities to develop through the school. We do a lot of work around our ‘Super Learning Skills’ and the children adopt and demonstrate these skills daily. When asked about our approach, pupils commented that they though having a ‘Growth’ or **'Milver-Mindset'** towards their learning should be included within these ideas. It is particularly pleasing that the pupils themselves realise why the messages of the 'Milver-Mindset' are important for them as learners as a part of our community.

**6 Key messages**

* Know and Show the difference
  + between a ‘Milver-Mindset’ and a ‘fixed mindset’
* We understand ‘The power of yet’
  + not ‘I can’t do this’, but ‘I can’t do this… Yet’
* Struggle and challenge help us to improve
  + We relish the really tough challenges
* Mistakes help us to learn
  + This is the best way to learn something new
* We praise the process
  + We know that perseverance and hard work help us to succeed
* We like to be curious!
  + We want to be brave, try new challenges and learn new things

**How you can support your child and us**

The team here at Milverton are keen to ensure that the children's home lives also reflect the messages about learning we are promoting in school. After all, learning is a life skill and does not stop when children leave the school gates. The children's lives at home need to support the messages that they are learning at school. If the messages that we are advocating in school are then not replicated or contradicted at home, this can be unhelpful. The following ideas are ones that would ideally be followed at home to help support the learning of your child in school.

**Ask your child about Fixed and (growth) Milver-Mindsets**; use the language they use about learning to talk to them about their own learning.

**Value mistakes** - if mistakes/failure occur at home, explore why and what has been learnt.

**Promote resilience in your child** - the message is 'Never Give Up!' Instead of saying, "I can't do this,' say, 'I can't do this YET!' (a small word makes a big difference to the Mindset with which the task is being approached).

**Embrace struggle & challenges** - feeling stuck is OK, the struggle of challenge is when real learning is happening. Acknowledge how it makes them feel and relate these feelings to learning which is positive.

**Encourage your child to be curious** about the world around them, take risks in their learning and try new things.

**Avoid exposing your child to comments such as, "I was never any good at maths**," This encourages them to have a Fixed Mindset towards certain learning. It makes it OK to suggest that some people can do some things whilst others cannot. This sets barriers that are simply imposed by our minds. If you put in the effort to achieve tasks, potential is limitless.

**Share with them your own experiences of learning to do new things-** allow them to see that learning continues into adulthood and adults can find learning challenging too.

**When praising the achievements of your child, ensure that you talk about the effort and skills that have gone into whatever it is they have achieved. The praise should reflect the process that has gone into achieving it.**

If you refer to your child as being 'clever' it makes the achievement about them and their intelligence. Their intelligence defines them. This is fine in the short term when things go right; if they have done well, they are clever. However, what does it mean if things go wrong? They are a failure and this is hard to bounce back from. The child will become brittle in the face of adversity and will be less able to cope when things go wrong. Many 'able' children fall into this trap and struggle when they find a task particularly challenging.

Additionally, in order to get 'intelligence' type praise in the future, they are likely to produce/do things that are not challenging for them to achieve in order to ensure they get that praise again. If they know that the praise they will get is about the process, effort, skills and struggle they have gone through in order to get there, they are more likely to challenge themselves and make mistakes in order to learn something new. This is when real learning happens and will lead to progress over time.

Do not personalise the praise by referring to them, for example, "You are a clever girl!" Although this is a natural response and appears to be supportive of your child, research has shown that this kind of praise can be detrimental in the long term. The gains are short lived as the child is being defined by their intelligence. The message that children hear is that Mum/Dad/Care giver care about their intelligence and therefore that must be protected at all costs. They will stick to producing things they know they can do well, in order to get praised. This does not lead to the learning of new skills and subsequent progress.

**Examples of Praise phrases to avoid:**

**"Well done, you are a cleaver boy/girl!"** (child hears that you value their intelligence and therefore less likely to challenge themselves in future for fear that they may get something wrong.)

**"That's amazing, you did that so fast."** (child hears that the speed at which they complete tasks is important which means the child is less likely to challenge themselves in future with tasks that they cannot complete speedily.)

**"You're so brilliant, you got them all right**!" (child hears that to gain approval, they must get everything right and therefore are unlikely to challenge themselves in future to ensure they get everything right again.)

**Good examples of praise:**

**"I can see how hard you worked on that and it really paid off!"** (However, only reflect the effort if it was there or this is damaging.)

**"I love the way you have added so many vibrant colours to get across the message of joy."**

**"You have found so many great examples to back up your statement. That really shows you understood the reading."**

**"You have really thought hard about how to present your idea in an original way for the termly homework. Well done!"**

**"I'm impressed with how you challenged yourself by thinking about how you could find an algebraic formula for this."**

Simply put, praise the effort, level of challenge and process that has gone into the learning rather than the intelligence.

All of the above encompass the key messages of the 'Milver-Mindset' which will lead to higher levels of achievement and will ensure that our children foster a 'love of learning' that will stay with them for life. The earlier we can start that process, the more successful and independent learners they will become.

Allow yourselves as adults to hear your own Fixed Mindset voice when it occurs in your mind and challenge it. It is surprising how its presence in all of us can have such an effect on the decisions and opportunities we take. If it can have that effect on adults, consider the power these messages can have on children and their development.

**What is the difference between the Fixed and Milver-Mindset?**

There are two different beliefs that feed the Fixed or Milver-Mindset; it is fundamental how we perceive the brain.

The brain and intelligence are fixed. What you are born with is what you have and that's that. **FIXED MINDSET.**

**or**

Science shows that the brain is continually developing as we learn new things. The more our neurons fire to bridge the synapse gap as we practise something new and put in effort, the more the brain develops. The brain can be considered to be like a muscle in this way. **MILVER-MINDSET.**

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| **Fixed Mindset Characteristics** | **Milver-Mindset Characteristics** |
| Avoid Challenges | Embrace Challenges |
| Give up easily | Keep Going |
| Intelligence Fixed | Intelligence develops |
| Hate Criticism | Learn from Criticism |
| Avoid Failure | Learn from failure |
| Hate making mistakes | Learn from mistakes |
| Setbacks discouraging | Learn from setbacks |
| Effort Pointless | Effort Important |
| Ignore Feedback | Use feedback |
| Threatened by others success | Inspired by others success |
| World is fixed | World can change |
| **Achieve Less** | **Achieve more** |