

# More Than Mindset: Contributing to a brighter Future for Scottish Education

## Executive Summary



Growth mindset is well-known within education, but it is sometimes misunderstood and implemented inconsistently, which can minimise impact.

Robust research, coupled with insights from Scottish education leaders, practitioners and pupils, reveals that:

- Fostering growth mindset approaches in education is crucial for developing a positive learning environment. It's a continuous process requiring conscious practice and systematic implementation.
- However, 'growth mindset fatigue' exists. Some teachers and schools believe they've 'already done mindset' after a single workshop or lesson. Others may overlook the importance of context, or focus only on how mindset manifests in pupils, rather than in themselves too.

### The current landscape in Scottish education

Budget concerns, teacher retention, pupil attendance, behaviour, staff and pupil wellbeing, and the poverty related attainment gap are key challenges in Scottish education.

There are no silver bullets, but mindset can play a crucial role for individuals and the education collective. It is much more than teaching growth mindset to children, it's about cultivating our own personal resilience and creating a culture that is conducive to learning and improvement for all.

The More Than Mindset report examines Scotland's educational challenges and presents evidence on how growth mindset can (and does) help navigate these challenges.

Independent research shows that embedding a growth mindset within the learning community improves:



Teacher wellbeing and motivation, creating a more positive learning environment



Pupils' mental health as they embrace challenges and positively engage with the learning process



Relationships between school staff, parents and pupils



Teachers' professional and personal development by embedding impactful strategies



Lifelong learning, and future-proofing young people's skills



Pupils' behaviour, confidence and social skills



Sustainable culture change for improving teacher and leader empowerment

## But we've done Growth Mindset!

One factor hindering the development of a growth mindset culture is the presence of a 'false growth mindset'. Dr Carol Dweck, the academic behind growth mindset research, describes this as claiming to have a growth mindset without truly understanding it.

Everyone has a mix of fixed and growth mindsets, excelling in some areas while facing fixed mindset triggers in others. This report demonstrates to educators the benefits of embracing their own mindset journey and looking out for their fixed mindset triggers. Educators should treat their own mindset development as part of their continual professional journey to improve their own outlook and capabilities alongside the young people they support.

## Sustainable change - improving attitudes, culture, and outcomes.

Key findings from the PHIRST evaluation of Winning Scotland's 'Mindset Teams' programme (2021-23) revealed:

- The programme was valued by teachers, pupils and stakeholders for supporting children's education and wellbeing.
- Teachers' attitudes and knowledge of growth mindset improved after training.
- School-level data indicated a higher percentage of pupils achieving expected writing levels in Mindset Teams schools compared to others.
- Importance of the programme in improving children's wellbeing, social skills, engagement, and future aspirations.
- Embedding a growth mindset in school policies and ensuring resource allocation were key to programme uptake, delivery, and sustainability.

79%  
believe the  
programme will  
make them a  
better teacher

74%  
feel their  
relationship with  
their pupils has  
improved

80%  
of schools report  
improved pupil  
resilience,  
persistence, and  
work ethic

Stats from Winning Scotland's  
impact and evaluation data



To implement a growth mindset, we must understand the science, apply it in context of Scottish education, and test it practically. Continuous refreshers, peer support, systems change, and accountability are essential.



Growth mindset approaches, when correctly applied, are impactful and align with national education priorities, benefiting teachers, pupils, and school communities, especially in health and wellbeing.



Scotland's educational landscape is changing, creating uncertainty. Growth mindset can help by building confidence, self-belief, and resilience.



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More Than Mindset  
Evaluation Report