

Learning
AT KING'S



Holistic Learning at King's

Martin Luther King once said: **"Intelligence plus character; that is the goal of true education"** and at King's we firmly believe in a holistic approach to education which delivers both of these outcomes.

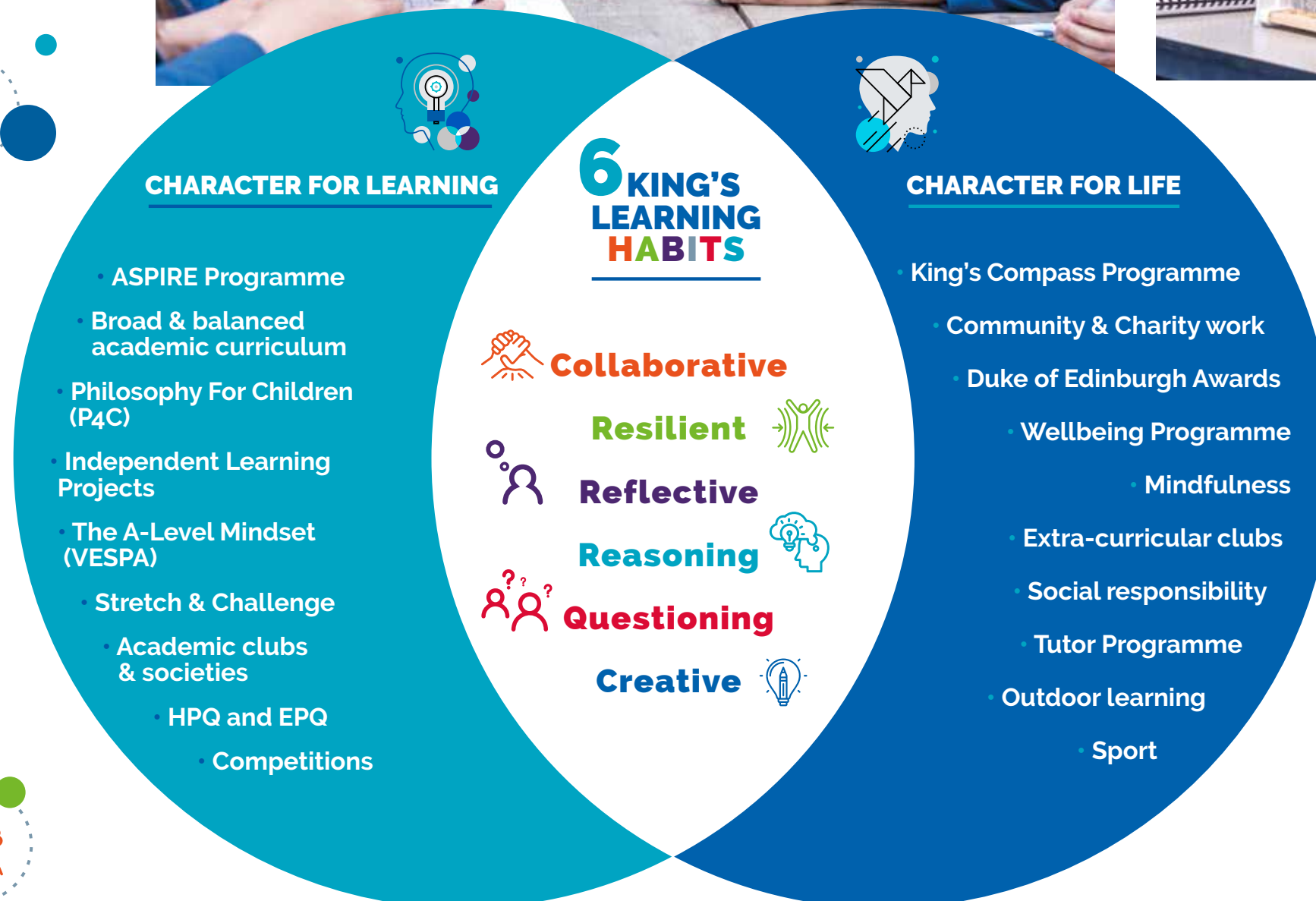
The King's School may be one of the oldest schools in the country, but we have a modern, progressive curriculum and state-of-the-art facilities. From the Infants through to the Sixth Form, our curriculum is firmly focused on developing the learners, workers and leaders of the future.

Our first two aims are to 'challenge our pupils to aspire, work hard and achieve' and 'to develop lively and enquiring minds.'

To achieve this, we have instigated our 'commitment to learning'. This means that all lessons will involve:

- Pupils being challenged and thinking for themselves;
- Activities designed to build curiosity, engagement and understanding;
- Pupils actively investigating and asking searching questions;
- Opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they know, how they are progressing and what they need to do next;
- Pupils working in collaboration;
- Pupils' curiosity enhanced and their understanding assured.

#FutureReady



Character for Learning; Character for Life

Developing Intelligence

Our Senior curriculum is designed to develop lifelong learning skills and inquisitive pupils who want to explore, investigate, ask questions and find out the answers for themselves.

Learning Habits

Alongside the usual course content in pupils' lessons, King's students also develop crucial life skills or 'Learning Habits' in every lesson. Teachers deliberately plan to develop these habits in all lessons. The King's Learning Habits are:

- **Resilience:** emotional toughness in dealing with challenging work and situations.
- **Reasoning:** being careful, methodical and logical thinkers.
- **Questioning:** having enquiring minds which can ask good questions and investigate them, as well as being prepared to question and challenge ideas.
- **Reflecting:** being able to learn from mistakes and reflect on successes to continually improve and plan ahead.
- **Collaborating:** team-work and developing the skills of listening and empathy
- **Creativity:** imaginative thinking and playing with possibilities to problem solve and find solutions.

We want our pupils to feel confident enough to grapple with challenging issues, as well as pose their own questions and feel confident presenting a different view.

At King's, we value questions just as much as answers. We encourage all pupils to go beyond the curriculum, to discuss and explore. In doing so, pupils are already demonstrating life skills sought by universities and in the workplace.

Pupils in key Senior years (typically Years 7–9) are also taken off their normal timetable and given 'Challenge Events' to develop specific skills which may be resilience, team working or independent learning. Recent Challenge Events have included an engineering challenge to encourage co-operation and team working and an outdoor learning challenge.

King's Compass

The Compass programme offers a holistic approach to personal development, combining indoor learning through PSHE with a rich programme of outdoor education that makes full use of the school's extensive grounds. Pupils cultivate the King's values of: **courage, compassion, respect, service, leadership** and **gratitude**, while engaging in opportunities designed to build resilience



"It has made me much more inquisitive, I think outside the box more."

- Pupil

and character. A mindfulness programme for Year 7 pupils, with refresher sessions for older year groups, and a strong study skills element ensures that students are equipped with the tools they need to achieve academic success.

The importance of nurturing the whole child has never been greater. At King's, this is central to our ethos and a source of pride, with PSHE and outdoor education playing a vital role in preparing pupils for life beyond school and in



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Independent Learning

Our curriculum encourages pupils to be more independent and to question the knowledge they are presented with, as well as to reflect on their own learning processes.

A programme of independent projects allows pupils to work under their own initiative and go beyond the taught curriculum.

All pupils in Years 7–9 are required to complete an independent project each half term. Topics range from Catapults in Science and Castles in History in Year 7 to a 'Moral Issues' project in Religion and Philosophy and a topic of the pupil's choice in Year 9.

These projects are designed to allow pupils to develop their own interests and investigate academic areas beyond the taught curriculum. They help to develop intellectual curiosity as well as providing pupils with a change from normal routines.

In Year 12, Sixth Form students complete the highly-regarded Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), where students write a 5,000-word independent project. This qualification continues to develop the learning habits and encourages independent research and reflection; skills that are invaluable as students prepare for university and the workplace.

A recent audit of King's curriculum by the Teaching & Learning Organisation (TLO) stated: "In many schools the development of independent learners is a well-intentioned yet largely unfulfilled pipe dream. Not so at King's – initiatives from Year 7 through to the Sixth Form are carefully designed to give learners increasing opportunities to exercise personal initiative and to undertake independent study.

"Learners talk enthusiastically about these opportunities and the development of independent learning sets King's apart from almost all other schools."

Challenge & Enrichment

At King's, providing challenge and enriching pupils' learning is very important to us – we are proud of our academic record and are committed to ensuring all our pupils fulfill their potential.



Enrichment Provision

Our enrichment provision is co-ordinated by our Head of Challenge & Enrichment and our Deputy Head (Academic). It takes place both inside and outside the classroom, to really stretch the most able. Every lesson contains a degree of extension, which can take the format of tasks of increasing difficulty, opportunities for higher order thinking such as evaluation, and leadership roles within the classroom.

We also accept that there are some pupils who are particularly able or gifted in certain areas. Where this is the case, we closely monitor their attainment to ensure that they are reaching their high potential. Our staff will have high expectations of these pupils in all their class work, homework and assessments. Our bespoke tracking and monitoring systems

allow our staff to closely monitor attainment and effort in line with a pupil's ability and we have a number of intervention strategies to ensure that the exceptionally able remain challenged, engaged and motivated in all subjects.

Within the classroom

All departments offer enrichment provision. Staff plan and deliver lessons which ensure all pupils are intellectually challenged.

Many lessons are enquiry-based, with open-ended problems and questions so more able pupils can be encouraged to push their learning further and go beyond the normal confines of a subject/topic. Questioning is used to encourage pupils to apply their knowledge to new areas or to think deeply and broadly about a given subject.

Our teaching styles are varied and highly engaging, so that pupils take an active role in their learning and are encouraged to go beyond the confines on the curriculum. Pupils will be taught not just about their strengths, but also where any weaknesses may lie so that they can be taught how to overcome these. Lessons will involve a variety of different approaches to learning and may take the form of debates, workshops, guest speakers and visits beyond the classroom.

SPACE programme

From Year 9 upwards, we provide those students at the very top end of each year group with a mentor.

Each mentor will have two or three students and they will meet as a group three or four times each term. Mentor sessions will focus on developing pupils' interests and passions and encouraging them to go beyond the curriculum in their favourite subjects.

They will also practise discussing and debating current issues. The emphasis is on academic aspiration, scholarship, and super-curricular study to complement the enrichment on offer from the co-curricular programme.

Speakers' Club

At King's, we also place great emphasis on leadership skills; we are, after all, preparing the leaders of the future. Pupils are

encouraged to develop their public speaking skills through our TED-style talks, assemblies, debating and presentations. Visiting speakers, lectures, university-style seminars and visits to universities encourage our pupils to think beyond the confines of the school curriculum.

Outside the classroom

Many of the academic clubs and societies that take place at lunchtime and after school allow pupils to develop their talents and interests.

These include Debating Society, Electronics Club, Chemistry Club, French Film Society, STEM Club, etc. We regularly enter pupils for a range of national competitions, such as the National Maths Challenges, Maths Olympiad, Cipher Challenge, Linguistics Olympiads, Model United Nations and a variety of writing



"Pupils are self-motivated and ambitious about their learning. A wide range of subjects are available, which successfully allow pupils to follow their interests and aspirations. Pupils thrive, make good progress and consistently achieve well."

ISI INSPECTION 2025

competitions – and we have had many successes and medals won. These all help to develop pupils' abilities on a bigger platform that extends beyond school.

King's is a member of the 'North West Gifted & Talented' organisation and, as such, we host events each year that offer broader opportunities for not only our most able students, but also those from across the region. For those who are talented in sport we have a range of highly successful teams (in some cases of world-class standard) and have a high representation in county teams. Our Sports Department is made up of more than 20 highly trained staff, who are often high achieving athletes themselves. Coaching is to a very high standard and pupils are supported with strength & conditioning sessions, nutritional advice and mentoring.

The range of music ensembles, bands and orchestras means

that any talented musicians will be more than catered for. Our Music Scholars are encouraged to get fully involved in the musical life of the school and to perform concerts and recitals. There is a full calendar of performances taking place locally, regionally and internationally, with annual concerts in Chester, Liverpool and Cartmel, plus tours to Wales, Italy, Prague and France.

Aspiration

In the Sixth Form, our 'Aspire' programme prepares students for university entry with a series of sessions designed to challenge those who wish to apply to the more competitive universities, including Oxford and Cambridge, or most competitive courses such as law, medicine and veterinary medicine. The course is wide-ranging and involves speakers, seminars, mentoring and interview practice relevant to a student's career aspirations.

In short, at King's we want to challenge every pupil at their own level and the most able or talented will find plenty to stir their passions.



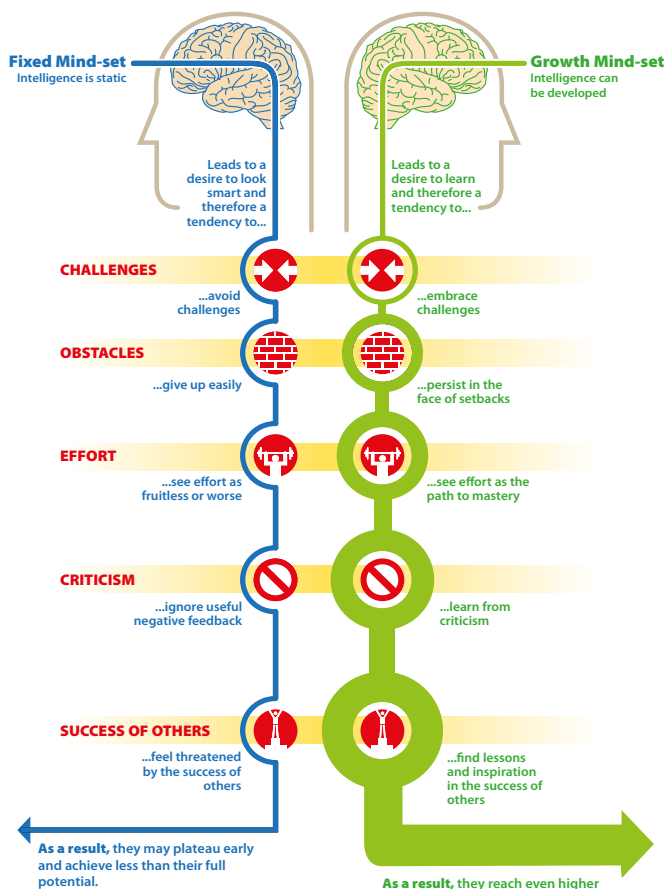
Developing a 'growth mindset'

We want to help children to develop a growth mindset; pupils who realise they can improve with hard work and resilience. What we want to avoid is a fixed mindset; the idea that intelligence is static and can't be improved. Children with fixed mindsets tend to think things should come naturally and quickly or they won't come at all, or that struggling with something means failure.

We want to create resilient students who do not give up easily and see the value in persevering with difficult material and tasks. We want questions to be valued as much as answers.

Parents and staff can help influence this by praising a child for hard work and effort, allowing them to make mistakes and realise that failure is not always a bad thing, or by sharing their own experiences of hard work and effort. Sometimes, it might mean ensuring that pupils 'get stuck' and then learn how to deal with that scenario.

By praising children for the process rather than the outcome, we are helping pupils to understand what they have done to be successful and what they need to do to be successful in the future.



VESPA: The A-Level Mindset

In the Sixth Form, we build on the Growth Mindset programme lower down the school with our VESPA programme. Students are encouraged to have:

- **Vision:** a clear sense of where they want to go and what they want to achieve
- **Effort:** put in the right amount of independent

study and proactive learning

- **Systems:** organise their learning resources and time, having systems to enable them to achieve
- **Practice:** develop their skills
- **Attitude:** respond constructively to feedback and setbacks

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