

# WiltshireTimes

## Mature approach to learning at school

BRATTON Primary is a school that places an emphasis on independent, mature learning.

The school, which has 140 pupils and five classes, takes the unique approach of encouraging its pupils to fail rather than succeed, in the hope it will make them more resilient.

Headteacher Ian Bolton said: "I have been here for 17 months and in that time I've introduced a growth mindset ethos, based on the work of Carol Dweck, which means we encourage pupils to fail. It might sound a little bit oxymoronic but it works.

"We believe that if they are not failing, they are not being pushed hard enough. We teach them that failing is not only okay but necessary. We want them to fail in a brave way.

"We can all achieve something great if we work hard, so instead of praising them for their work, we say that it's good but could be better with hard work. It has worked really well so far.

"We have achievement assemblies every other week at the school where the children speak to the whole school about what they've done well and what they need to improve for next time. We don't just hand out badges like confetti, pupils need to earn them.

"This has bred the culture that it's necessary to make mistakes in order to improve."

The four values at the school's core are resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocal – values which permeate through everything at the school.

Its mature approach to learning was highlighted by its interest in the EU referendum and the conservation of rainforests in South America.

Mr Bolton added: "We had a school referendum week to coincide with the EU referendum, complete with ballot boxes and written letters. We wanted to make the pupils understand that it is a huge decision which will impact their future.

"Pupils have recently been taking an interest in South America and preserving the rainforests there. They approached me earlier this year and said that they wanted to hold an after-school fete to raise money.

"They did everything themselves, including making flyers, and raised a total of £350 with the fete and a tea party. It was a very good learning experience and they really enjoyed it.

"We want every pupil to progress and enjoy learning."

An OFSTED inspection in 2012 rated the school as 'Good' and it now wants to consolidate and build on that rating.