The Abbey

KINDNESS

Kindness

Being helpful to someone who needs it,
not in return for anything, not to benefit the
helper, only for the sake of the person helped.

Rhetoric II, Aristotle

The genesis of kindness

At The Abbey, we have three values that guide us in all that we do: kindness, courage and honesty. Kindness is the most important of them, and is the theme for this magazine showcasing Abbey students in their own words.

There's a reason kindness matters so much. It comes from an ancient root word ǵenh, which relates to creation and giving birth. This ancient word also lies behind the word 'genesis', in fact, as well as kindness. Ǵenh gives us two closely related modern English words among others: kin and kind. Kin is family. Kind is type or group.

Ultimately to be kind means to treat people as if they are of the same kind: part of the same group, tribe, and family. Unkindness is in this original sense another word for every form of discrimination: to treat people badly because they are viewed as of a different kind.

To be kind is to live with compassion and empathy, to embrace our common humanity, and to live alongside and for others, as they live alongside and for us. It is not a nice-to-have. It is at the heart of being human. That ancient word ǵenh means to have children and to recognise them as kin and kind, as people in common, who share interests and who help each other achieve them. By being actively kind to everyone we help to build humankind.

We want every student at The Abbey to live with confidence, purpose and joy; to think, create and feel deeply; to express themselves to the full and go out into the world with the assurance to live lives of meaning. In this magazine they engage with the concept of kindness with exuberance and fun and authenticity and imagination. That's what we see from them every day at school. It's what makes this such a wonderful community of which to be a part. We hope you enjoy their work and ideas!

Senior Gallery
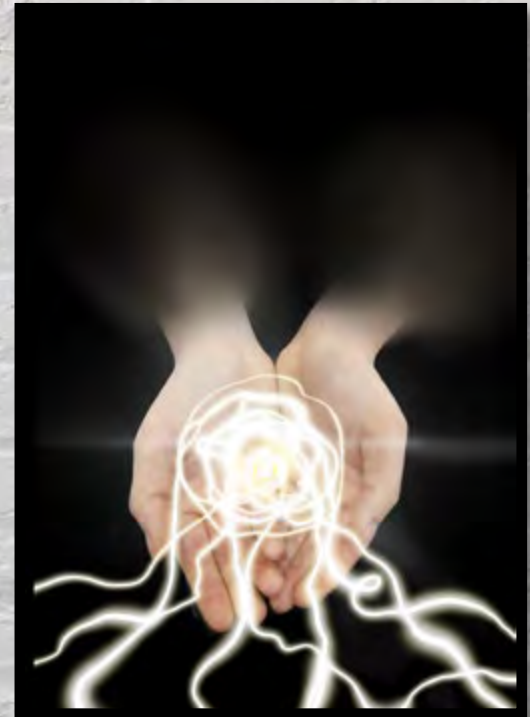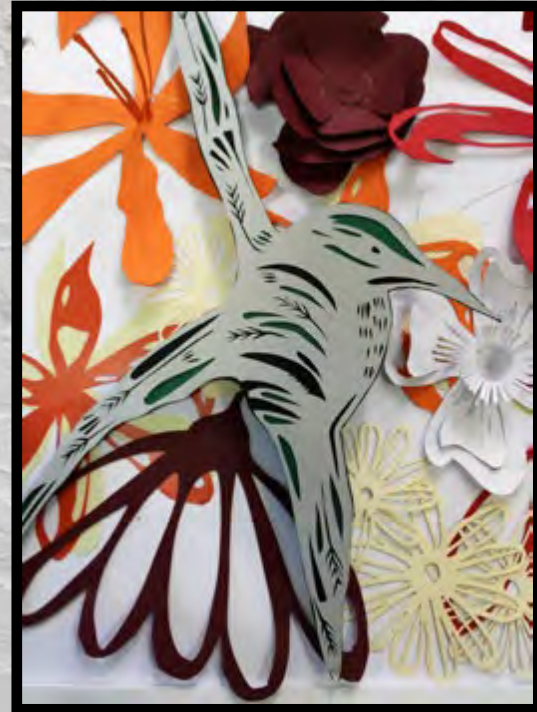
Elon Musk's Starlink initiative: an act of kindness or a monopoly on technology?

Is Elon Musk's Starlink initiative about kindness or money, power, and control? Starlink is a satellite constellation that aims to deliver global internet coverage. Elon Musk hopes that "Starlink will bring internet access to some 3 billion people who were previously unable to access the internet easily" and it currently provides service in 36 countries. Does this initiative come from the kindness of his heart or a motive to obtain money?

Photograph: Hannibal Hanschke/AP

Access to the internet is something you may regard as normality as opposed to a privilege, since it has integrated into your everyday life. However, only 54% of people have access to the internet globally and this is a problem that Starlink aims to tackle. This constellation of low earth orbit satellites uses radio signals in contrast to the conventional cable/fibre optic technology, hence allowing it to create a computer network that is optimised to process a very high volume of data with minimal delay. It allows rural, less populated areas to access reliable internet.

This supports the idea of the Starlink initiative as an act of kindness, as it gives that helping hand to developing countries by allowing them to access something which the developed world considers to be routine. Musk gave satellite access to Ukraine at the beginning of the full-scale war. Starlink's use of radio signals meant that they couldn't be jammed, consequently allowing armed forces to have stable and operational communications between headquarters and the frontline military. Starlink

aided Ukraine not only on the battlefield but also back home as it played a crucial role in the rapid restoration of communications. With technology becoming more prevalent in modern times, it plays a crucial role in war.

On the other hand, was Musk's true motive to be kind? The richest man on the planet considered stopping funding Starlink in Ukraine because he was losing around $20 million a month as he believed that the US Military should be responsible for funding Ukraine instead. However, according to Ukrainian Activist Melaniya Poddyak, "thousands" of Ukrainians were paying Musk's company monthly as she showed her bank account with more than £6,000 in outgoing payments to Starlink. Musk has a net worth of nearly $200bn and his company SpaceX has predicted annual revenue of $30bn from Starlink. So why does a comparatively measly $20mn a month make him reconsider his choice to help the country and save lives? Is it truly an act of kindness if the ultimate motive is money?

Additionally, Musk angered Ukrainian leaders by suggesting that Ukraine ought to acknowledge Russia's sovereignty over Crimea and other annexed regions to establish peace. He believes this to be the only solution to "de-escalate the situation". This shows how Musk is utilising the Starlink initiative as a means to becoming politically involved in Ukraine as he strives for something other than money - power.

There is also a possibility that Starlink will have exclusive possession or control of supply in technology - a monopoly. Arguably, Starlink can't become a monopoly because there are so many other internet service providers present already. However, this isn't the case in many rural areas where internet connectivity is unreliable or unavailable hence making Starlink stand out as it takes control. Starlink's two main competitors are OneWeb and the Amazon satellite company Kaiper as they both also aim to provide global, reliable internet access. Nevertheless, OneWeb is only targeted towards businesses and Kaiper
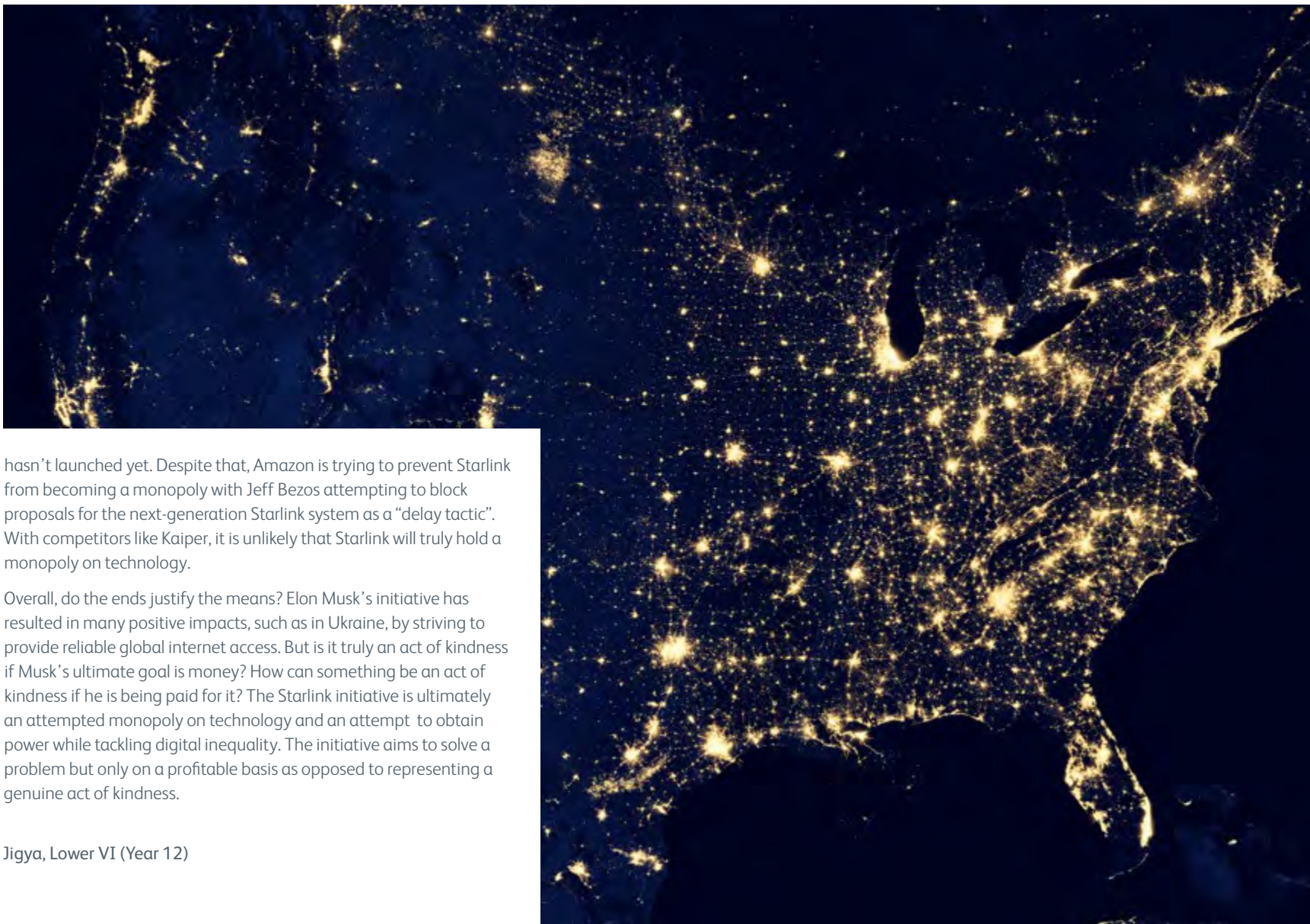
hasn't launched yet. Despite that, Amazon is trying to prevent Starlink from becoming a monopoly with Jeff Bezos attempting to block proposals for the next-generation Starlink system as a "delay tactic". With competitors like Kaiper, it is unlikely that Starlink will truly hold a monopoly on technology.

Overall, do the ends justify the means? Elon Musk's initiative has resulted in many positive impacts, such as in Ukraine, by striving to provide reliable global internet access. But is it truly an act of kindness if Musk's ultimate goal is money? How can something be an act of kindness if he is being paid for it? The Starlink initiative is ultimately an attempted monopoly on technology and an attempt to obtain power while tackling digital inequality. The initiative aims to solve a problem but only on a profitable basis as opposed to representing a genuine act of kindness.

Jigya, Lower VI (Year 12)

Biology -
how kindness affects your brain

Gianna, Upper III (Year 7)

There are different acts of kindness in the world and everyone has done something kind before, but have you ever wondered: what does kindness do to our brains?

It is scientifically proven that kindness makes us happier and can help protect us from depression, but how and why? These are a few reasons:

Firstly, deep in the human psyche is the sense that helping others is the right thing to do. For some, it's spiritual. Kindness aligns us with a deep sense of spiritual purpose, and some people are taught that kindness always has a way of coming back to us.

Secondly, helping others simply feels satisfying. For many, no explanation is necessary. It's just the way it is. Kindness feels right and it feels like you've done something good which might motivate you into doing something kind again.

In science, there's also the fact that we have 'kindness genes'. The main gene associated with kindness is actually one of the oldest in the human genome, at around 500 million years old. This means it has played a role in our survival over a long period of time. As a result, we are drawn to help others and we get an intuitive sense that kindness matters.

Kindness has been shown to increase self-esteem, empathy and compassion, and improve mood. It can decrease blood pressure and cortisol, a stress hormone, which directly impacts stress levels. People who give of themselves in a balanced way also tend to be healthier and live longer. It brings a fresh perspective and deepens friendships. Kindness to ourselves can prevent shame from corroding our sense of identity and help boost our self-esteem. Kindness can even improve feelings of confidence and optimism.

And for the brain, psychologically, kindness can positively change your brain. Being kind boosts serotonin and dopamine, which are neurotransmitters in the brain that give you feelings of satisfaction and well-being, and cause the pleasure/reward centres in your brain to light up. Endorphins, which are your body's natural pain killer, also can be released. Acts of kindness create emotional warmth, which releases a hormone known as oxytocin. Oxytocin causes the release of a chemical called nitric oxide, which dilates the blood vessels.

Meditation is also a form of kindness to yourself. Practising loving-kindness may protect your genes and slow down the ageing process, a new study has find. Chronic stress and ageing take their toll on the mind and body, including our genes. A number of studies show that for some, meditation decreases stress, and slows down the rate at which cells age. Studies show that people who actively help and support others, family members, friends, or those in the community, might actually be more likely to live longer. Experts say that kindness is one of the main features of intelligence. In other words, good people are the smartest.. And mostly kind people are the happiest.

Are you always happy? Is that because you've done something kind? How is kindness affecting your brain?

The kindness of disasters – how humanity unites

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a harder battle".

Plato

We live in a world where disasters are now sadly a common event and not something we only read about in history books. Disasters take many forms, from worldwide pandemics such as Covid-19 to the aftermath of hurricanes, tsunamis and landslides that devastate life and the surrounding communities; terrorist attacks such as 9/11 and wars such as Afghanistan and the current war between Ukraine and Russia. Disasters can also be revealed over time: the recent World Cup highlighted the lack of basic human rights and liberties within many parts of our world through the loss of lives from poor working conditions in building the stadiums. However, if you look beyond the immediate aftermath of a disaster, there will always be stories of kindness and how the touch of human kindness provides strength and the ability for the human race to survive.
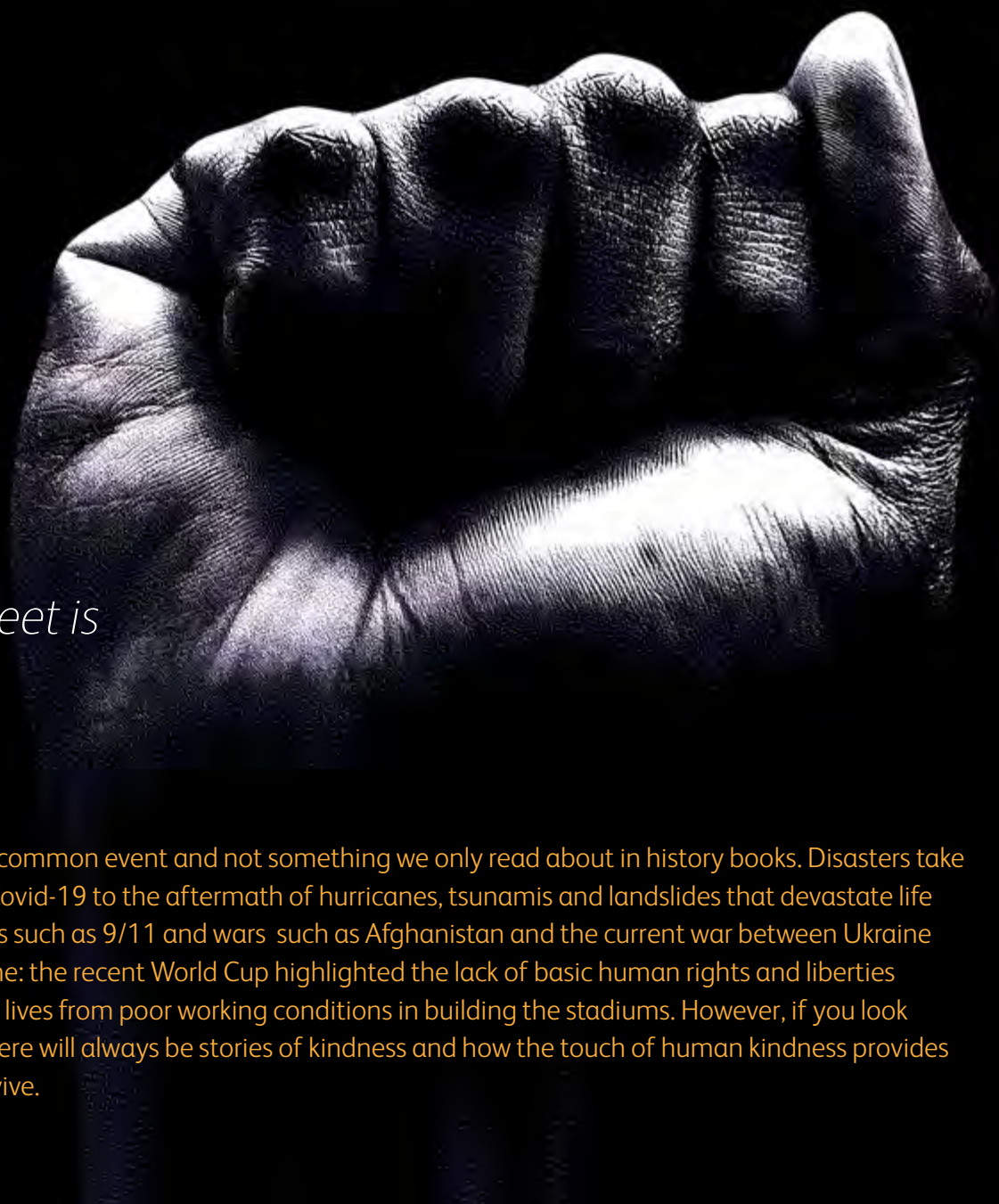
Kindness is the 'genuine willingness to use one's time, talent and resources to better the lives of others and the world through genuine acts of love, compassion, generosity and service.'

Natural disasters such as the aftermath of hurricanes, tsunamis and landslides, often see communities left without power or running water, with emergency services overwhelmed and transport systems paralysed for long periods and with many suffering from both emotional and physical challenges. The kindness of strangers in such situations has the effect of softening the blow and providing hope.

There are many examples of disasters provoking extreme selfishness and brutal survival-of-the-fittest attitudes such as looting and rioting, but when you take a closer look, many who suffer and cope with crises are altruistic in outlook and the bigger picture is often one of cooperation and support. People donate to fundraising, give up their time, belongings and talents to support others. They donate their skills in repairing homes and helping the injured, rescuing people and animals and providing shelter and meals. During the Covid-19 pandemic many checked in on their elderly and sick neighbours and did weekly shopping for those in need. Many of those who hoarded supplies of toilet rolls and broccoli often found themselves sharing their supplies.

Elderly Londoners can still be heard recalling fondly the unity and empathy experienced during the Blitz, which emerged from the suffering and loss of loved ones, homes and lives. The stories told often have huge emphasis placed on the kindness and generosity survivors felt and on the small acts of kindness which have thereafter been remembered and treasured for lifetimes.

In the aftermath of 9/11 there were many reports of an immediate sense of solidarity in New York and within the US as a whole. The musical Come From Away tells a story of the Newfoundland Community who provided kindness and shelter to 7,000 air passengers who were grounded as a result of the 9/11 attacks. Passengers were invited into the lives of the Community and their fears and heartache along with cultural differences were overcome and gave way to lasting bonds and friendships.

Alongside the reporting on the news of many of the disasters which occur, are multiple stories of kindness, cooperation and friendship. Races come together to pray, embrace and provide vital human contact to those in need. Human contact restores faith in life and provides a reason for people to go on.

Selfless work for others brings a sense of purpose for many and an infectious positivity which spreads a sense of wellbeing and hope and belief in kindness. People forget their own anxieties and fears and become kinder to themselves too, setting aside selfish concerns. People move to behave as their better selves in the face of disaster and they find a meaningful role for themselves in social connection and are able to see more clearly where that is missing from their everyday lives. This is followed by people making very real positive changes to their own lives which ultimately better the world as a whole.

Humans need human emotional support to survive and disasters recentre our thoughts on what is truly important and essential for us to live in our current world. The bottom line is that we need each other. The more we relate to others, the stronger our bond and the greater our ability to survive.

When we face the toughest challenges our true natures are revealed. We are brought together and reach out to each other in kindness and empathy. We are unified in the face of disaster and catastrophe.

Kindness is and hopefully always will be one of the most beautiful and powerful forces for good. It is love in action and it is deeply sad that often it takes a disaster for us to remember the basic necessity of kindness for our survival. Kindness breathes life and goodness back into our souls and gives us strength. It reminds us of why we are on Earth and how we can use our lives to help others.

Disaster changes the world but the damage is not irreparable. The kindness generated by disasters restores balance and meaning and lays the foundation for a brighter and more beautiful future for us all.

Charles Darwin believed that "the human being's capacity for kindness is instrumental to his evolutionary success". Kindness is our defence against ourselves and our world.

Tolstoy wrote that "nothing can make our lives or the lives of other people more beautiful than perpetual kindness". If enough people are kind then it makes us proud and when even more people want to be kind then it makes us hopeful. Kindness is in our genetic makeup and whilst it is often masked by jealousy and selfishness it is never far from the surface. We all need to remember that we have a natural impulse of kindness.

My favourite book is *Wonder* by RJ Palacio, the story which many of you will know of an ordinary boy with an extraordinary face. Whilst I in no way mention Auggie so as to imply that his situation is a disaster, where the disaster lies is in human behaviour and the way Auggie is treated by some in that story. However, what is surprising is that it is not the devastating scenes of characters within the book being mean to Auggie which causes me to feel great emotion: it is the moments of kindness at unexpected times and in often unexpected ways which make me cry.

It shouldn't need disasters to manifest kindness and nor should it take the failings of human nature for us to remember the power of kindness and unity in the face of disaster. It is always in our power to provide the counter balance of unity and kindness when others are in need.

Aurelia, Upper IV (Year 9)

Can pop songs inspire kindness?

Most of the time pop music might be able to inspire kindness because most of the pop songs are quite positive and it makes people happier. To some people, if you listen to pop music then it makes you happy and want to sing along. If people listen to pop music and it makes them happy then people will probably be kind and caring to other people and then the other people will be happy and kind to more people then it will be sort of a chain reaction of people being kind. Another way that pop songs might inspire kindness is that if you listen to a song that has something to do with being nice to people then it might inspire you to be nice as well. For example, in the song *Be Kind*, the song mostly says 'you can be kind to the one' and that means for some it might make you want to be nice as well.

But then it might not make some people happy, and it might not have an effect on the way others are treated at all.

Lucia, Lower III (Year 6)

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I think that some pop songs can relate to kindness because some pop songs have kindness and the Song Artist may be trying to connect us to people around the world.

Elva, Lower III (Year 6)

Pop songs can influence you because when you are listening to them and the rhythm is stuck in your head you'll be thinking about it all day or at least as long as it's stuck in your head for then you'll wonder about what it might mean and how doing what it says in the song can affect other people. It can influence you because you might make you want to act and do something kind.

Anneliese, Lower III (Year 6)

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Music is magical in that it can encourage one to be more empathetic and loving toward others. Songs written specifically about a simple act of kindness are potent in inspiring goodness in their listeners. A simple act of kindness can help lighten that burden and make a challenge seem less overwhelming. Music can be a friendly reminder of the bonds we share. During difficult times in our lives, we often experience the give-and-take of helping and being helped, caring, and being cared for. Catchy pop songs can help create a feeling of positivity. They tend to get stuck in your head too!

Jocelyn, Lower III (Year 6)

Music can encourage a lot of people to be empathetic and kind towards others. Some songs are specifically written to convey kindness and inspire people to be kind to other people: a song like "don't worry be happy" by Bobby McFerrin is an example of a pop song that inspires happiness and kindness. Some pop songs can get stuck in your head and make you feel happy and loving for the whole day, pop songs affect your mood by helping you feel more confident and make you have a good attitude toward people. Pop songs express loads of different types of emotions such as sad, angry, happy, excited, loving and many more! This could also affect your mood in a positive or negative way.

Isabella, Lower III (Year 6)

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Pop songs can inspire kindness if they are to do with kindness. Also, music is magical so when you hear the song you turn out to be quite loving and affectionate to other people. On the other hand, if the song is loved by people, they want to hear the song more than once and the love gets transferred into everyone's hearts. Also, if the lyrics of the songs are about kindness, the message goes to the people as well.

Snigdha, Lower III (Year 6)
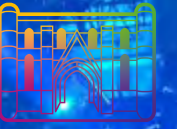
Do you have to be kind to be successful in the workplace?

Juliette and Annabelle, Lower V (Year 10)

Kindness has sometimes been considered a weakness in the working world. The key to climbing the corporate ladder is portrayed as having a strong work ethic and emphasis on number-oriented goals, even at the expense of an enjoyable work environment and wellbeing.

However, in the workplace, a culture of kindness is proven to increase sales, boost creativity and collaboration, and motivate workers. A recent study showed that people treated with kindness at work repaid it by being more generous to co-workers compared to a control group. This in turn encouraged emotional wellbeing and productivity, by increasing energy levels and positive perspectives.

This suggests a culture of kindness is beneficial on an employee level; but what about on a leadership level? For decades, business owners and entrepreneurs have taken personality tests to help determine whether they have the right qualities to climb the corporate ladder and succeed. The Myers-Briggs personality test examines a combination of four categories that make up 16 possible personality types. Of all these possible combinations, ENTJ is the most likely personality type of a CEO. They are known as 'commanders', and are highly driven, rational, outgoing and charming. They are motivated and find the greatest happiness in their achievements.

This is not entirely surprising: CEOs are helped by these characteristics to come up with bold ideas, and to put them into play. If you look at top CEOs such as Mark Zuckerberg (of Facebook) and Elon Musk (of Tesla), they both are said to have an extremely strong work ethic, even to the point of obsession. However, the most effective characteristics for a CEO may be flexibility, creativity and communication: and yet people without the brutality of a stereotypical CEO may not be willing to do what it takes to get to the top.

What is clear is that it is beneficial, if not essential, that leaders can create an environment of kindness within companies and organisations so that the workplace is productive and collaborative.

"Kindness is beneficial for all and is mandatory for those who are seeking true success, no matter the goal."

Adrienne Bankert
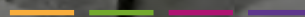
Is kindness found in the myths and legends of the classical world?

Holly, Lower IV (Year 8)

While classic mythology can be considered brutal and cruel, there is plenty of kindness in the myths and legends. There is even a God of Kindness,Eleos or Elea (Clementia if they are Roman), who was the personification of mercy, clemency, compassion and pity.

Now onto examples. One of the most famous examples could be Hephaestus giving fire to the humans. While he was punished for his kind act by Zeus it shows that even the gods show kindness. Another example could be when all the Lemnos women decided to kill all the men on the island, but Thoas the king of Lemnos, was secretly spared by his daughter.

Set against this, there is much cruelty in the classical world. It could be mortals boasting that they are better than the gods and getting punished like Arache and Athena, wars happening between different countries or simply the immortals fighting with each other.

So even if there are examples of kindness, doesn't this bring back the question of whether there is true and meaningful kindness in the myths and legends?

In my opinion, the fact that there are so many stories of kindness, whether it is Gods helping out humans or family members watching out for each other, actually shows the importance kindness has. Even among all the cruelty and brutality, kindness is a constant.

Kindness or cruelty?
The euthanasia debate

Euthanasia is an international issue, being a legally accepted procedure in countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands, yet still a controversy and an illegal act within the UK. Its essential role in medical ethics is always an important topic to consider: is it an act of kindness or is it simply cruel?

Initially, it is vital to acknowledge the meaning of euthanasia and its difference from assisted suicide. Euthanasia can be defined as the ending of a patient's life when they are suffering from an incurable or painful disease, or in an irreversible coma . It differs from assisted dying or assisted suicide because in euthanasia, the action is taken by the physician, while in assisted dying, the physician gives the patient the means to commit the act themselves. Euthanasia is often a sensitive or taboo topic that many people prefer to not discuss. However, by understanding the reasoning behind both sides of the argument, we can gain a better insight into this ongoing debate and build an informed opinion on this discussion.

The General Medical Council provides an expectation of "a good doctor" and thus the basics of good medical practice within the UK. The baseline of this comes down to the Four Pillars of Medical Ethics , which are:

Autonomy - giving the patient the freedom to choose freely, when they are able

*Justice - ensuring fairness*

Beneficence - doing good

Non-maleficence - doing no harm

In the euthanasia debate, all four Pillars of Medical Ethics are important to consider; however, in my discussion, I will focus mainly on the overriding pillar: autonomy. Autonomy is always the leading pillar in making decisions for healthcare professionals and this is because, in almost all cases, the medical treatment or choice made comes down to the patient's consent.

The reason why euthanasia is such a disputed topic given this basis of the expectations under Medical Ethics is due to the fact that, often, for suffering patients with an interest in undergoing euthanasia, it is uncertain whether the patient has the mental or physical capacity to make a medical decision for themself. As a result, due to the subjective nature of the decision-making procedure, it may be seen as an act of cruelty: to allow someone to undergo such an action if there is a risk that they are not in the correct headspace. Furthermore, is it fair to give relatives of the patient the role of making such a decision, without truly knowing what lies behind their choice? For example, their choice to allow the patient to undergo the procedure may be to alleviate pressures to care for them or to pay medical bills. In contrast, it could be that undergoing euthanasia is, overall, beneficial for

the patient, but the thought of forcibly removing life from the patient is an idea too unbearable for their relatives to accept and so the procedure is never accepted or undergone.

On the other hand, the alternative argument for euthanasia, brings another set of considerations. Many people question whether it is the physician's role to ensure non-maleficence, to do no harm, and thus allow the patient to benefit from removing their ongoing pain, if there is no hope of improvement in their situation. In addition to this, many people believe that euthanasia is acceptable given that the patient can be left to die under palliative care, providing them with a comfortable way of death, ensuring they leave their life in a condition where they are satisfied rather than under ongoing pain. As a result, this reasoning claims euthanasia is a kind consideration of a patient's comfort on their passing. Finally, the gradual increase of certain countries' acceptance of the procedure has triggered a wave of medical tourism, leading patients interested in undergoing euthanasia within the UK to travel abroad. This poses a great issue, as the same question of providing comfort for the patient is broached: shouldn't patients
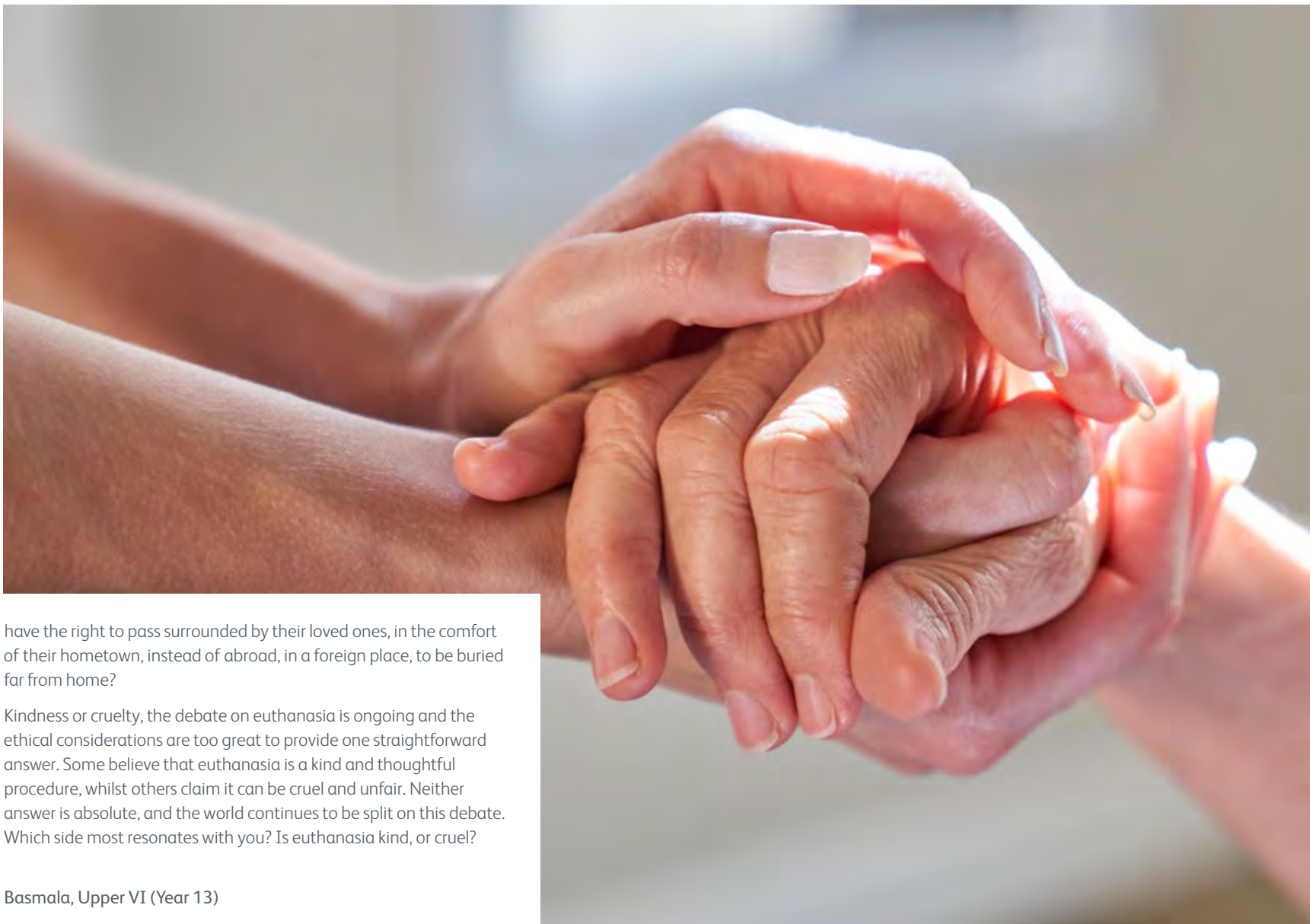
have the right to pass surrounded by their loved ones, in the comfort of their hometown, instead of abroad, in a foreign place, to be buried far from home?

Kindness or cruelty, the debate on euthanasia is ongoing and the ethical considerations are too great to provide one straightforward answer. Some believe that euthanasia is a kind and thoughtful procedure, whilst others claim it can be cruel and unfair. Neither answer is absolute, and the world continues to be split on this debate. Which side most resonates with you? Is euthanasia kind, or cruel?
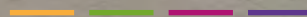
Basmala, Upper VI (Year 13)

How can we be kinder to our planet?

We can be kinder to our planet by trying not to use disposable plastic bottles and trying to reuse plastic bags. We should also try to recycle more and also instead of driving, try and use public transport, walk or cycle or anything else. Also, instead of buying clothes made out of polyester, try and buy clothes that are made out of organic materials. We should try to not to throw away too many things and instead of buying new phones each time one breaks, you can try to get it repaired because it is cheaper and it is more eco-friendly.

Mahi, Lower III (Year 6)

Here are some ideas

- *Recycle*
- *Plant a tree*
- *Litter picking*
- *Walk instead of using a car*

Why should we do all of this?

We should walk instead of using a car because it creates less noise, less air pollution and results in fewer emissions that are warming the atmosphere making the icebergs melt which makes it more likely to flood as part to climate change. See, doing something very little can result in something bigger than you think.

Planting a tree can help the environment with global warming because trees help to combat global warming by absorbing carbon dioxide, removing and storing carbon while releasing oxygen back into the air.

Every piece of trash that is taken away to be recycled or deposited in a landfill means there is one less dangerous item for birds, turtles or whales to swallow. Clean-ups also restore these creatures' habitats.

Jinxin, Lower III (Year 6)

There are many ways that we can be kind to our planet such as:

- Put our food wastage into the compost bin to make the waste decompose and make healthy soil
- Recycle all our plastic, paper and metal and turn it into something new
- Stop throwing things into landfill, it is bad for the environment
- Stop chucking things into the oceans! Think of the poor sea animals!
- Do NOT chop down the trees, if we don't stop we will destroy natural habitats
- Do NOT blow up mountains, we have enough rocks and minerals, it also ruins the habitats of the mountain animals
- Do NOT release THAT much Carbon Dioxide into the atmosphere (for the factories)
- Travel Green
- Be nice to the wild animals, do not kill them, they are precious

Lucia, Lower III (Year 6)

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle.

We hear these words so often, but what do they actually mean? How can we be kinder to our lovely planet? What does it mean to be sustainable? If you read on, you will understand.

Firstly, we need to stop using so many important materials for objects we use in daily life. Wood to make tables? Plastic to make bags? Why can't we try something else? We can use seaweed, bamboo and so many more. So, we need to reduce the amount of materials we need in our everyday life.

Second, if we do buy all these things, then we can at least reuse them, and make the best out of waste. If you have leftover material, from, let's say an art project, instead of throwing it, why don't you use it to make something creative? Here are some ideas: you could use old toothbrushes to clean the carpet, you could use plastic cans to store things, you could turn a shoebox into a picnic basket, and so much more.

Finally, we need to recycle. We recycle when we collect and process materials that would've been thrown away, and we turn them into new products. This benefits the environment, as it prevents people from throwing products into the garbage bin. Also, as recycling saves energy, it also reduces greenhouse gases, which helps stop climate change.

Anaisha, Lower III (Year 6)
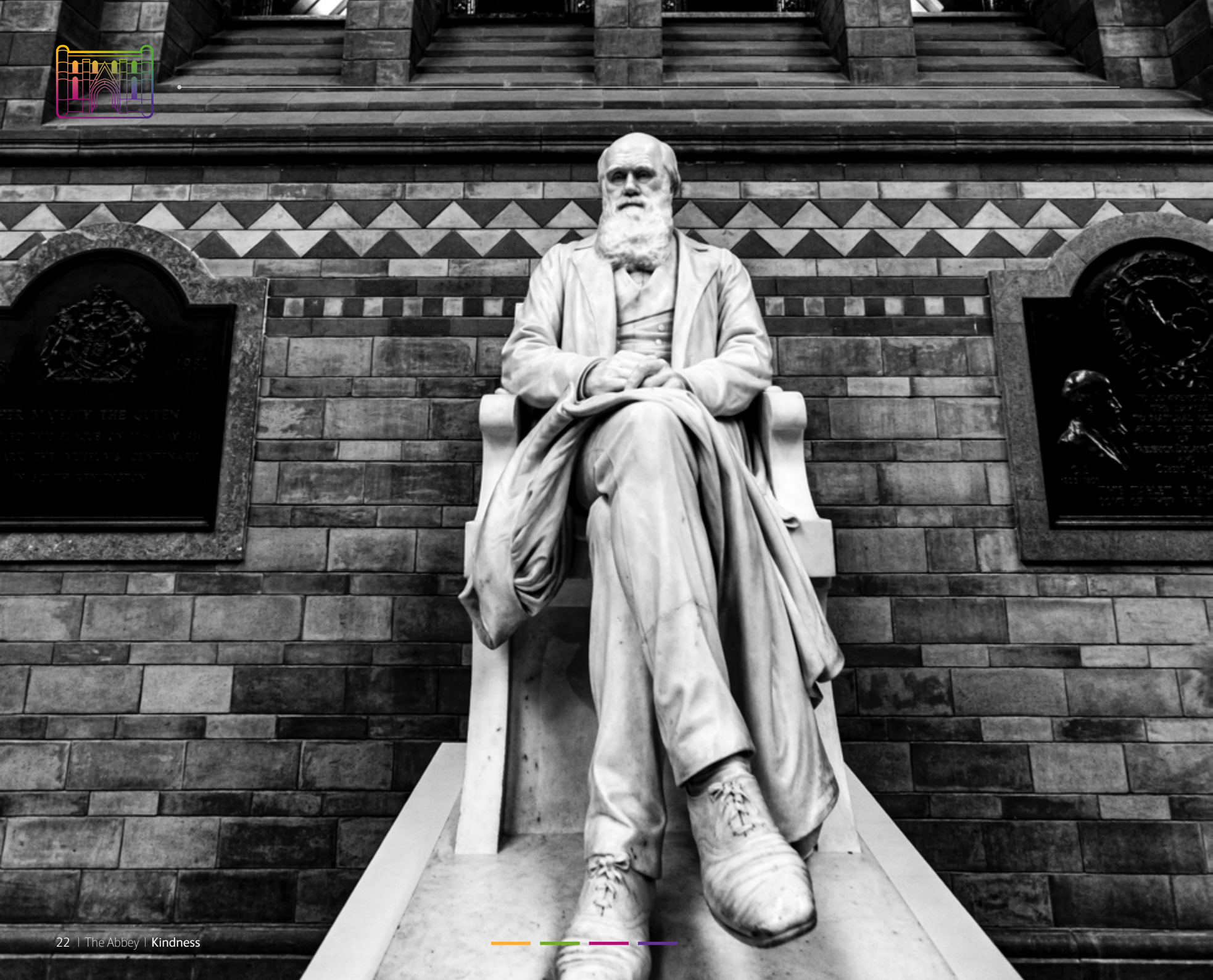
Is kindness an evolutionary trait?

Reeti, Lower VI (Year 12)

Kindness puts a smile on people's faces and brightens up their day. Despite the fact that the word 'kindness' didn't emerge until the 14th century, kindness may be the most important evolutionary trait since bipedalism.

Take Darwin's theory of evolution: the idea that species can change over time, that new species come from pre-existing species, and all species share a common ancestor. You could argue that natural selection is the reason that you are able to read this article in the first place. However, does this theory also apply to the evolution of kindness? First, let's look at the example of the chameleon. Before chameleons could camouflage themselves, they were vulnerable and visible to their predators. Through the study of natural selection we know that spontaneous mutation would have led to variation among the chameleons. In turn, this variation would allow one chameleon to more accurately match the colour of its surroundings. Over time, more effective camouflage would probably have saved the chameleon from its predator and allowed it to survive and reproduce to pass on this favoured trait through genetic material that are called alleles. A perfect example of survival of the fittest in action.

Nevertheless, kindness seems to form a paradox with this competitive process of natural selection where only the fittest survive. Preliminary approaches from Darwin's time up until the 1960s tried to explain the evolution of kindness through the hypothesis that individuals behave cooperatively for the benefit of their group or species, despite personal interest. This theory - 'group selection theory' - was the only explanation for decades before scepticism creeped in. Could cooperative societies have evolved without being competitive?

The more recent selfish gene theory helps to explain this. It states that natural selection favours kindness to close relatives who look similar to us and share our genes. Providing aid to a relative is a way for us to pass on copies of our own genes as well as the fact that helping them, helps us in proportion, depending on the closeness of the relationship. However, this doesn't affect kindness towards strangers. For that, science has - you guessed it - another theory. This time it's called the theory of 'reciprocal altruism' and follows the latin phrase 'quid pro quo', meaning that 'You do this for me and I'll do that for you'. If two strangers take turns in exercising kindness, they can establish a relationship of repeating cooperation that benefits them both.

Nevertheless, it doesn't take a genius to know that this reciprocal altruism is often neglected in society. We've all heard the phrase: 'You have to be cruel to be kind'. We could look at this short-term cruelty resulting in long-term kindness as the continued evolution of an evolutionary trait. Another way kindness has evolved in modern society may be through random acts of kindness (I'd like to think we are more concerned with spreading smiles, rather than passing alleles, through kind actions). Some may argue that random acts of kindness are nice, but completely one-sided, and you have no way of knowing if it will even be paid forward. However, according to the Mayo Clinic Health System, kindness can physiologically have a positive impact on your brain. Being kind boosts serotonin and dopamine levels which are neurotransmitters that give you feelings of satisfaction and well-being and cause the reward centre of your brain to light up. In short, being kind is a win-win situation.

So, learning from these theories (the theory of evolution, natural selection, group selection, selfish gene theory and reciprocal altruism) we have learned that kindness is in fact an evolutionary trait (that may indeed still be evolving today). We should take that little bit of extra time to pay that kindness forward.

When action follows heart

Ana, Upper IV (Year 9)

Kindness: what is it? Is it an action, is it a thought, or is it just an emotion? Is kindness all of this or maybe even more? Is it that all of us have learnt to be kind, or is it a natural instinct? How do we classify if someone is kind or not? Do we measure it like cm or grams? Surely everyone has made a mistake which did not lead to the kindest outcome - does that make them a bad person? We may all associate kindness with the words "please" or "thank you." Perhaps an "I'm sorry" too. All of our words and actions have an impact on the lives of others and, most importantly, on our own. Kindness is not always about the happiest outcome at a certain point. Kindness is mostly a choice. This can be as simple as choosing to smile and wish someone a great day or as complex as working to create a medicine that will change the opportunities for many people. Is knowledge important to the aspect of kindness?

Intelligence stands behind many inventions. Unfortunately, intelligence does not always bring kindness. In other words, kindness might enrich someone's life more than intelligence can. Some technologies do not benefit humans in the best way: they may disrupt living things, endanger their health, or worsen the effects of global warming on the planet we inhabit. It is always a choice of how intelligence is used. Some may create something absolutely life-changing. It may all start as a thought until eventually there is a spark leading to a great invention. Take a hearing aid for instance. It is not the easiest task to make something so complex. It is difficult to pinpoint the precise time or person who invented hearing aids. Even before the development of electrical hearing aids, humans used hearing aid horns to direct sounds into the ear and correct hearing loss. Hearing aids are now digital devices. Technological advances have sparked the creation of increasingly creative solutions to hearing loss. This and many other inventions are kindnesses because they affect so many lives. I can relate to this specific topic because my grandma has a minor hearing loss, which made understanding and answering speech particularly difficult. With this kind and helpful thought that sprouted into much more, life was made so much simpler! But are the kindest acts always the ones you think about?

Natural kindness is almost like being on autopilot in human brains. These are the actions you do without thinking almost like an automatic response to whatever is happening. This can be as simple as saying 'good night' to your family or reminding yourself to pack a small snack for a busy day. It also may be the simplest traits of patience or forgiveness. These random acts of kindness—given without expectation of thanks or reciprocity—feel good in the moment and help connect people to their community. But then if you don't necessarily think about kindness, is it truly kind? Nobody scientifically understands as everyone has a different mind set! We have been lucky enough to be taught how we should treat others. This could relate to a saying you are surely all familiar with: 'treat people how you would wish to be treated yourself'.

Does kindness matter? Yes: kindness matters. Kindness is so strong that it can unite so many people in such a wholesome way. Take an incident from World War I for instance. On one Christmas day some English and German troops didn't want to fight so they united while playing a game of football. This small example of kindness on both sides was a glimpse of hope that is important in the history of human nations. Is there a bad side to kindness? Perhaps some people think of kindness as about being liked in society. And perhaps some people think they are being kind but are actually behaving in an unequal way, for example we may treat individuals more kindly if they have more power, wealth, and a better lifestyle. In my opinion, this is when "kindness" is more of an expectation than a value. Will kindness change in the future? Development of new technologies could lessen kindness throughout communities. We are all witnessing the promotion of technology including phones and laptops. In the future there may be less interaction between people as they sort out daily life without physical interaction, meaning kindness with personal speech can diminish. But this does not have to be the case. The world is aware of this possibility and it is very important that kindness is never forgotten. Kindness is always right when you follow your heart. This way can kindness can never be lost!

Would we be kind to extraterrestrial life?

Nikita, Upper III (Year 7)

Is it more terrifying to be alone in this universe, or to be surrounded by extraterrestrial life? This very question and its branches has been perplexing both physicists and psychologists for many years. When most people think of extraterrestrial life, they think of little green men. Although this statement is highly ambiguous, we humans have hammered this image into our heads. However, if complex forms of life like these little green people did exist, how would we react as a human race? Whilst I hope we would welcome the "foreign" life with great kindness, I know that we might also show symptoms of mild or even extreme xenophobia. Xenophobia is a strong dislike or prejudice against people from other countries and cultures - in this case, from a culture that really is alien.

So would we be kind to this alien species - whether Jovian, Martian, Neptunian, life from the outer solar system or even occupants of exoplanets? Kindness is an essential part of life, an emotion, a feeling, an action. Kindness releases serotonin and dopamine, which give the feeling of satisfaction and joy. To explore this question further, I would like to put things into perspective.

Although I, as an individual, can never be exactly sure how humans would first meet or interact with alien life, I could certainly give examples. Let's say aliens somehow wandered onto the Earth after stumbling across the Voyager 1 spacecraft and hearing the Golden Record it carries, a collection of sounds and images taken from human culture and life on earth. Let's imagine they landed straight in your area (the chances of this happening are slim) to the surprise of you and your

neighbours. Take a second to think of how you would react. I know that I, personally, would (despite my wanting to be kind to the alien life) be afraid, though not xenophobic - at least I would try not to be.

How would you fare? Would you be kind? Would you be afraid? If you're a keen sci-fi reader, you may be influenced by the fact that most books portray the sightings of alien life as having a negative psychological impact on people. However, after a study concerning 500 users of the Amazon Mechanical Turk was carried out, it was proven that the responses to how people would react would be more positive than negative - it would bring excitement! But excitement doesn't necessarily mean welcome. For example, if a hostile organism was discovered, despite the intrigue, most people would reject any suggestion to bring it to Earth.

To summarise, I believe that as a race, humans will debate their reactions, and that overall, we will have unbalanced views on alien life if we ever find any! So, I think that the reaction and whether we are kind or not to alien species may change drastically from person to person. How would you react?

How do we create kindness?

Kindness is contagious and something that benefits us all. Here are several ways you can show kindness every day.

Focus on others

Kindness puts others at the centre. It is not focused on how it will benefit us or how many likes we can get on social media. True kindness, above all, comes from a place of compassion, understanding, and goodwill.

Offer a helping hand

Asking for help is one of the most difficult things to do. We often run from it, seeing it as a weakness and using it as a last resort. There are several easy ways to help others:

- Paying for the person's order who is in line behind you
- Helping a co-worker with a project
- Sending a motivational text to a friend or family member
- Holding the door open for a stranger
- Donating your time to a local nursing home, homeless shelter, or other local organisation

Be there to listen

Being a good listener is undervalued. A lot of the time, we listen only to respond. Being there to listen intently to a friend or family member can relieve stress, pressure, and anxiety. Remember that being a good listener requires you to give your full attention.

Stay connected

There is no excuse for not checking in and connecting with family and friends when we have access to immediate communication. A simple check-in text or call lets others know you are thinking of them. When available, connecting face to face offers something a text or phone call.

Smile at others

What happens when someone passes you and smiles? We are triggered to smile back. Smiling is contagious and has a positive effect on our mental health. It makes us feel better.

Say "Thank You" and "I'm Sorry"

A genuine "Thank You" and "I'm Sorry" carries a lot of meaning. Gratitude and apologies show that we are accountable for our actions and respect the other person involved.

Jocelyn, Lower III (Year 6)

Kindness can exist in many things. If you help others, you will feel happy. If you treat yourself, you will find that you will be kinder to others around you.

Being kind to yourself is also very important: for example, good sleep, good food, and having fun are all very essential for good well-being and being kind.

We can create kindness by helping others, doing kind things, and just lending a hand. Kindness can be created, but it can also just be by smiling at someone and creating it from the inside. There is no limit to the amount of kindness you have, or make.

Michelle, Lower III (Year 6)

Can we create kindness?

We can't literally create kindness, but we can just be kinder to others, and they in turn will be kind as well.

Does it just exist?

Kindness does exist, but it isn't an actual object that you can hold in the palm of your hand, it is a thing that you can't really define, but you know it when you see.

Is there a set amount per person?

The answer is no, there is not a set amount per person, you can be as kind as you want to be and there is no limit of how kind you can be towards others, it is your choice on how you can treat others.

How can we make more of it?

You can't exactly 'make' more kindness, but you can be nicer to others and in turn they, hopefully, will be nice to you!

Lucia, Lower III (Year 6)

We can create kindness by simply smiling, waving, hugging or even sharing anything and saying thank you. Kindness doesn't just exist we personally have to do something like smiling or waving and act, to be kind so kindness does not just sit there. Is there a set amount? Definitely not! Anyone can be kind, you just have to do it. Children, teenagers and adults can be kind - billions of people can be kind!

Emily, Lower III (Year 6)

There are many different ways to be kind towards another person. You could smile at them, give them a helping hand, use your manners, compliment them, stay connected with them, and many more. Kindness has no limit and you can be kind to whomever you want. You should always treat others how you want to be treated. We can make more of it by passing a smile or a hug onto another person. If you are kind to someone, it increases your happiness and self-confidence.

Isabella, Lower III (Year 6)

Kindness is something you create by doing something to make someone else smile or make them feel happy about something or cheer them up after a hard day. Happiness can be in doing something you love or just simply being with loved ones. Being kind to someone, seeing them smile, might make you happy and they might want to be kind as well.

Anneliese, Lower III (Year 6)

Junior Gallery
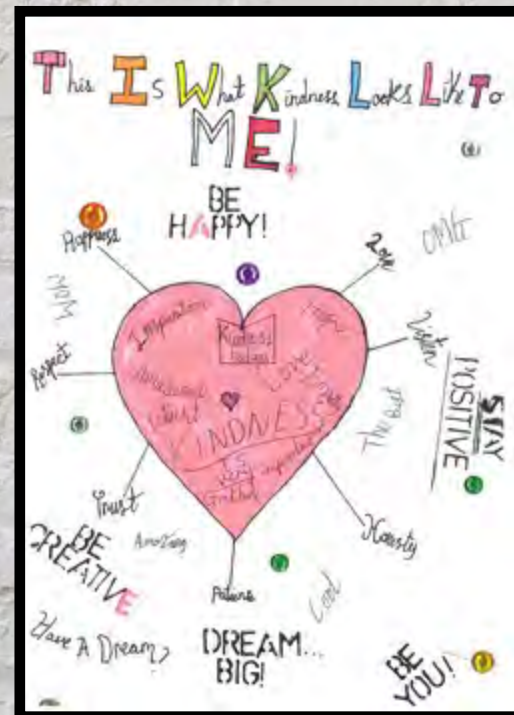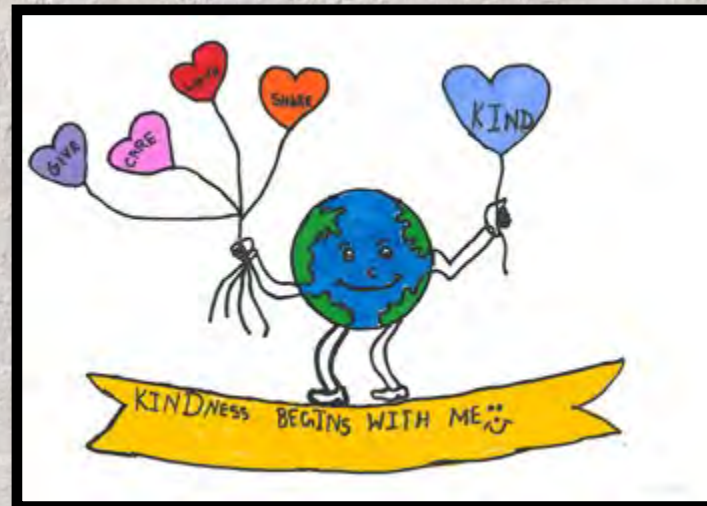
What is the kindest season?

The definition of the word 'Kindness', according to Oxford Languages' Google dictionary, is 'The quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate'. Anything that is kind must contain this essential kindness which leads to my first question: what does kindness look like?

I think that kindness is invisible. Obviously the actions of people doing acts of kindness can be seen but the actual quality may not be seen by the eye. This means that kindness is hard to find because however hard you look you're never going to see it, but somehow people are still able to have it and gain it with ease. Maybe kindness is given to people? When a kind deed is accomplished, kindness is created and given to them. It is then transferred from person to person and quickly spreads. Kindness is everywhere, even in places we would expect it least.

There are four seasons in a year and each one of them brings benefits and hardships for nature and for people. In weather, produce or the colour around us, all seasons bring something to the table. Each season is special in its own unique way but which is the kindest?

Winter brings the cold and bitter weather, wrapping up warm and celebrating with family and friends. However, the cold weather of winter brings stress and worry of having to pay bills for the electricity and gas to keep warm. For lots of people at the moment this is one of life's issues and each day I see news of people who are not able to feed their families or can't afford to put on the heating to stay warm. Celebrating is at the heart of winter but for some people it is impossible for them to get the supplies they need for their family, never mind welcoming other people as well.

Something else that winter brings is shorter daylight hours, which can cause people to struggle as they have to go about parts of their daily lives in darkness. This could also be looked at as a time to appreciate the light that has been given to us. Without light what would we do? With the shorter days we get something else: the opportunity to see the beautiful winter sunrise and sunset without having to stay awake at ridiculously early or late hours. Winter can bring a magical frosty wonder with crisp days and the chance to admire the beauty of a snowflake and the pattern of a frost. The joy of snow, building snowmen and snowball fights. I think that winter has been extremely generous to give us such a wonderful sight.

After the harsh weather of winter comes spring; the season of new beginnings and starts for animals and plants. Calves, lambs and chicks are all born and all the sprouts turn into beautiful flowers and burst into leaf. Spring is wonderful because it gives us the chance to explore the great outdoors after long months of being locked away indoors. The animals rouse from their long winter sleep as they emerge from hibernation. Flowers are scattered across fields and woodlands and the sunny weather returns with gusto. All the bees and butterflies can be seen across the countryside as they grow our food and make our honey. The chance of new life is a beautiful thing and for all animals it is the way to keep their species living. The perfect conditions that spring provides are what

is needed to raise young safely and isn't that the kindest thing: to raise the young and start a life?

With spring sun comes spring rain that may be unwelcome for some but beneficial for the environment. We need rain to survive. Around 97 % of the water on Earth is salt water, which means that we can't drink it and only the remaining 3 % is the water that we are able to drink - rain water. If all rain stopped then there wouldn't be enough water for the whole world and the human race would die out so it is a crucial part of life. Spring allows lots of rain and keeps us alive because without it, you and everyone else on this planet wouldn't be here and neither would the plants that keep us alive.

As soon as you say the word summer it brings thoughts of nice weather, beaches, holidays and ice-cream. The kindness of summer is infectious! It's a time to have fun with friends and family and relax. The sunshine is kind as it encourages food to be grown and in some cases allows energy to be created. Solar power is a renewable energy source that takes sunlight and turns it into electricity. Given sunlight is free this is a cost-effective way to produce electricity and a wonderful use of natural resources. The sun can mean more than just a nice summer's day - it can create renewable energy.

How kind is summer, though? The season may be full of smiles and sunshine, but the climate is suffering more and more each year. Droughts come routinely, with water

supplies reaching the lowest levels in years. The temperatures are slowly rising on our planet meaning more plants are dying each year and ice caps are melting. This is causing crop shortages meaning there is less food produced as we go into the cold, harsh winter. All this impact on the planet is surely not kindness but cruelty.

Falling orange and golden leaves, mild winds, this must be autumn - a respite in the middle of summer heat and winter frost. Autumn is full of kindness whether it be the smells of freshly baked goods or the crisp leaves on the ground. This is the season of colour. Every year the trees turn amber and gold and pumpkins are harvested and made into pies, cakes and puddings. Harvest is another marvellous part of autumn. It is the culmination of all the hard work that has been put into growing the food throughout the year. People give their thanks to the harvest and celebrate the bountiful crops produced.

Nevertheless, autumn has its downsides. While we enjoy the treats that have been produced, nature is stripped, leaves fall from bare branches, crops are harvested, clearing fields so they are left empty. Gloomy, dark grey clouds glare down on us and it becomes very sombre. How can we enjoy such a dark and dismal season?

However, after looking at each season I have to conclude that the kindest one is autumn. Autumn, however gloomy and downcast, bursts with colour and flavour. When thinking about autumn you can't help but ponder on the pumpkins, spices and other delicious seasonal produce that is collected. It is the peak of the farming season, when you can appreciate all the hard work that spring and summer has put into growing all the crops that will see us through the coldness of winter. Autumn's kindness allows us to be able to respect the wonderful world around us, when the leaves turn a symphony of orange, yellow and gold. Autumn is a very generous season and as John Keates starts his ode to autumn it is the 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, / Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun'.

Emily, Upper IV (Year 9)

Enigma: Strategy vs Kindness

Matilda, Upper III (Year 7)

In the summer of July 1939, some men met in a wood outside of Warsaw. They were Polish, British and French, and had met to exchange the key to the Enigma code - the complex cipher which the Germans used to transmit their messages during World War II. Solving it, they felt, would win the war.

The Polish had worked out that solving Enigma was not a matter of languages, but of maths. By hiring their best mathematicians to work on it, they had managed to crack basic Enigma and even make a model of the very machine used to transmit it. And now, they were going to be invaded by Germany, and there was nothing they could do, except give over their work in the hopes that at least their German occupation would be short-lived. Of course, the Germans kept evolving their code, but this was the proper start of the race to solve the Enigma.

Instead of clever linguistics, Enigma relied solely on mechanics. The Enigma Machine, as it was called, featured many complicated mechanisms that would take the input of a letter and output another letter - but the settings of how it did this changed every day. When the clock struck midnight, the Enigma codebreakers had to start all over again. One of the codebreakers in particular, called Alan Turing, created a machine that would try, using brute force, to decode it daily, but it wasn't quick enough - until they realised a common theme. Weather reports, for instance, would always appear at a certain time in the morning. So if you set Alan Turing's machine with the knowledge

that behind an encrypted passage lay the word 'Wetter' (weather), then the machine would have far fewer possibilities to go through. And this is how they solved Enigma.

However, once they cracked it they had a hard decision to make. What was more important - stopping every German attack they discovered, or keeping their knowledge of the code a secret? If they swooped in and saved thousands of British lives, the Germans would become suspicious, and eventually would change their code. Although nobody knows for sure, it is highly suspected that the bombing of Coventry - one of the worst in the war - was known beforehand by the Enigma codebreakers, who chose not to prevent it for fear this might make the Germans suspect that they had solved the code. This utilitarianism is one of the examples of choosing strategy over kindness - they had to let a whole city be flattened.

As they were scared of their achievement being known, the British also chose not to share it with the Americans, their allies in the war, although they did utilise the American intelligence that they saw. During the war, Alan Turing went over to America to be grilled on the British progress with

Enigma, and repeatedly had to play dumb and pretend to be impressed with American innovations. While the British desire for total secrecy is understandable, many lives might have been saved if the secret of Enigma had been given to the Americans, who were risking their lives to send boats of food to Britain during the war.

As for the Polish, when the process of breaking the Enigma code became declassified, they got little to no recognition for their work. In the famous film 'The Imitation Game' about Enigma, the efforts of the Polish cryptographers were reduced to one line. The solving of Enigma is estimated to have shortened the war by 2 years, saving approximately 14 million lives. This achievement was finally revealed in the 1970s, a time of oil shortages, three-day weeks and mass inflation. News of a British accomplishment such as this, albeit one that happened thirty years prior, would have been a welcome distraction at the time. Although the Poles have started to be acknowledged for their contribution, promoting British patriotism and morale by leaving out the contribution of other countries was strategy, not kindness.

Why are some people kinder than others?

Grace, Upper IV (Year 9)

The question 'Why are some people kinder than others' is a widely debated topic, and a very interesting one. This question has been the driving force behind many scientific studies, and in this article I hope to debunk some myths surrounding this.

We encounter acts of kindness on a daily basis, whether it be smiling at someone, or lending your friend some money when they're low on funds. Kindness is all around us, big acts or small. To start with, I think I should define kindness, and according to Oxford Languages' Google dictionary, 'Kindness is defined as the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.'

The origins of kindness can come down to many different aspects, but the most widely debated concept is the Nature vs Nurture debate. In the debate nature suggests that behaviour and personality traits are in our nature and these come down to our genetics; whilst on the other side, nurture suggests that our environment, upbringing, and life experiences determine our behaviour as we are nurtured to behave in certain ways.

I think that they both contribute to how we act. One of Nelson Mandela's most famous quotations tells us, "no one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite". In 1961 the world-famous social psychologist Albert Bandura carried out a study named the 'Bobo Doll Experiment'. In this experiment Bandura split a group of children aged three-six into six different groups: male aggressive, female aggressive, male non-aggressive, female non-aggressive, male control, and female control. The aggressive and non-aggressive groups each had their own adult 'role model'. These groups then got further split in half and one half had a role model of the same gender, and the other had a role model of the opposite gender. The control groups didn't have any role models and were left to their own devices throughout the experiment.

The role models would then enter the room and either verbally or physically attack the doll for the 'aggressive groups', or just ignore the doll and play/interact with other objects in the case of the non-aggressive groups. All of the children were then allowed to go to a second room where they had many toys at their disposal, but after a few minutes the object they were playing with was taken away each time. The purpose of the second room was to start annoying the children in preparation for the third room. Once the toys had run out the children were led to the third room, which contained aggressive and non-aggressive toys. The children in the aggressive groups took out their anger on the Bobo dolls, whilst the non-aggressive groups were content to play with the other toys and each other peacefully.

These children were shown how to be aggressive or kind to others and copied that behaviour when put into a situation, which shows us that aggression and kindness is a learned behaviour - this supports the nurture perspective. Haim Ginott, a child psychologist, said, "Children are like wet cement: whatever falls on them makes an impression". Another, more simple example is from Supernnany, when Jo Frost visits the George family. At the parent meeting in the episode she notes that the younger children are now starting to hit each other and this is due to the fact that their siblings' behaviour is rubbing off on them. Then later on in the episode the older children are tidying up the room and the toddlers help too, which shows us that the environment really does affect us.

However, nature and genetics are still a very prevalent factor regarding our kindness levels. When we think about happiness from a nature point of view, it can all be linked to our DNA. Research by psychologists at the University of Buffalo and the University of California has found that part of the reason some people are kind and generous is that their genes nudge them towards it. Their study indicated that the people who showed higher levels of kindness in various different situations e.g. helping neighbours, blood donations, money donations, volunteering etc. tested positive for higher levels of the hormone oxytocin.

Oxytocin is often thought of as the 'love' and 'happiness' chemical - this is because when you are feeling happy your brain releases dopamine, which produces oxytocin and this in turn causes you to feel a rush of positive emotions as well as increasing your self-confidence and optimism. Kindness stimulates the production of serotonin, which makes you feel happy, and a research study in Japan showed that people who were happier were more likely to pass the action forward and be kinder to other people. When writing an article for Mayo Clinic Dr Amit Sood stated that "researchers estimate about 30-60% of our kindness is genetically determined" whilst the rest falls down to our surroundings. Based on this you could say that nurture and nature play an equal role in our levels of kindness.

What do you think: why are some people kinder than others?

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

Nelson Mandela

Playing as a team - why kindness matters

Kindness brings people together and builds stronger teams capable of overcoming challenges/obstacles faster and easier. Promoting kindness at work and at school builds trust and strong bonds amongst friends and colleagues. Being a team with someone allows you to do double the amount of work as well as making new friends. Working as a team makes you happy as it reduces stress and anxiety. You could play as a team by helping somebody do something, giving positive feedback when they are doing/working on something, and listening to their ideas and incorporating them into your project. It is very important to work as a team, because there are some things you can't do on your own and need some extra help to complete.

Isabella, Lower III (Year 6)

Playing as a team is very important because then you have your team with you, your friends, your buddies and you get to have them working with you. They will support you no matter what and they will be there when you fall down and it helps you play well which helps you win because you know there is someone who has got your back.

Anneliese, Lower III (Year 6)

Kind people are often likeable to others, which can provide opportunities to develop meaningful relationships and love.

As our kindness positively affects others, we feel more compassionate, confident, useful, and in control.

When we see someone being kind or generous, it gives us a warm glow or feeling inside.

Kindness has been proven to increase our happiness, reduce stress and improve emotional wellbeing.

Acts of kindness can make the world a happier place for everyone.

It shows other people that you care about them and takes away some of the pain and suffering that they may be feeling.

Showing kindness to others makes a massive difference. Whatever the size of the act, it can change someone's mood and brighten up their day.

Jocelyn, Lower III (Year 6)

A team. What does this word mean to you? If you had to define it, what would you say? To me this is how I want the world to be: unified. Kindness plays a really important role in this.

For example, the war in Ukraine, Ukraine will not surrender but will do anything to return peace to their country so this depends on Russia's decision whether they choose to continue the battle or bring unity.

We are extremely lucky to be at a school which promotes togetherness through sport, art, music and maybe even maths! In Netball you're encouraged to pass to other people in your team and choose the best option to lead your team to happiness. Well, in a metaphorical sense. This is only one of the few examples of unity in our marvellous school.

How is happiness triggered when you're cooperating with your friends? What do you think? A scientific study shows that being around friends can just enhance happiness in general and can help you celebrate the good times and be there for you when you need a bit of support. This may be someone who you can talk to about any problems freely or just someone who you feel happy around. In sport being on the podium is not what it's all about, the joy of taking part is even better! To be together and have the right motivation are the key to happiness.

Sree, Lower III (Year 6)

Kindness matters because there is an old saying that says: 'Treat others the way that you want to be treated', and that means if you want people to be nice to you, you must be nice to them. If everyone was to be horrible to each other, then everyone would be sad, angry and miserable all the time. If everyone was sad and angry all the time then the world would not be an enjoyable place, at all.

Lucia, Lower III (Year 6)

What can sport teach you about being kind to yourself?

Hannah, Upper VI (Year 13)

Sport is all about pushing yourself. You always have to find flaws, train as much as possible, and try to be perfect, otherwise you are failing. After all, no pain no gain, right? In my experience, this is wrong. Of course sport is about doing your best, but it doesn't always have to be painful. In fact, one of the key lessons I have learned through sport is how to let kindness and compassion towards myself guide my progress as an athlete.

Around seven years ago, I learned to shoot Air Pistol with my local Scout group. A few years later, in 2019, I won my first international medal at Intershoot, a competition in the Netherlands, and soon after that I set a British record. Despite my success, there were some huge flaws in my training. I was focusing entirely on the technical side of the sport, almost completely neglecting the mental side. I learned the consequences of this the hard way. At Intershoot 2020, the first international I had been to twice, I suddenly felt huge pressure to beat my scores from the previous year. I lied to myself and to my coaches that I was feeling fine, but really I could no longer cope with the pressure I was putting myself under and ended up with a score lower than the one I had shot at my first ever competition. I had no strategies for coping with an event like this, and it would take two years for me to recover my confidence.

During those two years I learned a lot. Most importantly, I learned the importance of being kind to myself. To me, this does not mean being easy on myself. I still train even when I'm tired and I don't want to, and I always push myself to do better. The difference is that I no longer only look for my flaws. It is true that we are often our own harshest critics,

but it is so important to try not to be. Today, when I train I observe my performance as objectively as possible, and I never leave a training session without finding at least one positive outcome.

Acknowledging the good within the bad has been revolutionary for my self-confidence. Instead of spiralling downwards when something isn't going well, I am able to stop myself and think rationally: whatever the outcome, there will be something positive, so relax, focus on your goal, and remember that you don't have to be great every day, you just have to get better. Learning this approach was difficult, but to anyone who is struggling under pressure and lacking in confidence, I would really encourage you to try because it has been helpful for me in so many areas of my life.

I am proud to say that thanks to this new mindset, I recently matched my personal best score, three years after it was first set. The first time I shot this score, I looked to my future with an uneasy feeling, not really believing I deserved my success, and feeling pressure to repeat my performance. Now, I look towards the future with confidence and excitement, eagerly anticipating the challenges to come.

Is "kindness" a human construct?

"No act of kindness," Aesop reminds us, "no matter how small, is ever wasted." As a slave and storyteller living in Greece between 620 and 564 BCE, Aesop's perception of kindness is particularly striking given his circumstances. Harsh living, cruel tasks and no chance of an independent future are hardly prospects conducive to compassion, and yet his reminder comes at a time when Greek philosophers embarked on the process of quantifying kindness. To quantify something, however, one needs a definition and this is much disputed. Google suggests that kindness is "the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate." However, I believe there are many problems with this definition.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Aesop's message is the idea that kindness could thrive in times of slavery, which suggests an absence of kindness. However, the idea of kindness has always been prevalent in the world and is entwined inextricably with religion. Currently, there are more atheists in the world than ever before, but as only between 7-16 % of the present world population is secular, billions of humans are certain to have held some value to kindness in connection with the divine.

In Christianity, God teaches the connection with love, whereby "love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude." This line from 1 Corinthians views love and kindness interchangeably, and as love is an emotion (a way in which humans quantify chemical signals), it suggests kindness is an emotion and not a concept. Emotions can be felt by other species, but concepts, I would argue, pertain to humans only. The Quran teaches one should be "kind to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, near and distant neighbours, close friends, [needy] travellers, and those [bondspeople] in your possession."(Surah Al-Baqarah 2:263). In this verse, it is suggested that one should act in an emotionally compassionate, way, and further reinforces the religious, and therefore historical, prerequisite for kindness in human societies all over the world.

In the past, however, religion has also been used to restrict movements, actions and thoughts. The feudal system in England in the Middle Ages prevented peasant uprisings, and the fear of God, perpetuated by the Catholic Church, acted as a constraint on the actions of the masses. Therefore, this idea of kindness as part of religious duty could be used to restrict negative, potentially justified, actions towards oppressive feudal lords and barons. Is this use of "kindness" kind?

Regardless of the historical context, it is undeniable that humans show compassion towards others in times of distress. When the British colonists settled in America in 1607, the indigenous population provided aid and agricultural lessons to alleviate the hunger and despair the colonists felt as their crops failed. Moreover, the Bible teaches that the people of Malta showed "unusual kindness" to the shipwrecked and took them in and fed them. There is no gain to the local people in these scenarios. Despite that, both isolated populations were compassionate in a situation where prior communication, beliefs, religions and constructs would not have been shared. Does this point to kindness as a natural phenomenon, then, or a global construct, perhaps spread before humans left Africa 100,000 years ago?

Typically, the origin of a word helps us understand why and for what purpose a word exists. So, where does this word come from? "Kindness" has two main derivations. One of these, "kyndnes", comes from Old English (c. 450-1150 CE) and means "nation", and has roots in the word "kin". This evolved into our modern understanding of "courtesy or noble deeds" by the 14th century. The second word "gecynde" means "natural, native, innate", which suggests kindness is a natural feeling of compassion, which therefore motes the idea that kindness is not a concept, and more an aspect of life. These origins could suggest kindness is an umbrella term for compassionate or friendly actions.

Other forms of life can certainly be kind, which challenges the idea that kindness is a concept. In a study by the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Germany, African Grey Parrots aided each other to get food. Bird 1 had sole access to tokens and Bird 2 had sole access to walnuts. Bird 2 could only get a walnut if it gave the scientist a token, but the only way for Bird 2 to get the token was to be given one by Bird 1. There was no way for Bird 2 to pass Bird 1 a walnut, so there was no obvious benefit to this action for Bird 1. After a while, Bird 1 gave Bird 2 tokens, voluntarily.

This is a clear sign of compassion, but is this technically "kindness" (and not compassion) and is kindness always an act? Plato argues that "kindness is more than deeds. It is an attitude, an expression, a look, a touch. It is anything that lifts another person." This is a broader definition and suggests that kindness is not definitive, but is active, and is more a sense intended for goodness, which still applies as an umbrella term. Plato was a eudaimonist (a philosophy by which happiness is the highest aim of life) and all goods are undertaken to achieve this ultimate goal of happiness. Aristotle acknowledges that this "higher good" is always a disputed matter (a "kind" action differs depending on perspective) but everyone seems to agree that the word "eudaimonia'' is always used to denote the highest good, and is typically recognised to be kindness.

Comte argues a case for altruism, a philosophy which is defined by google as "selfless concern for the well-being of others". This is pretty close to the prior definition of kindness, and this altruistic mood can be seen in animals too. Ants, for example, will sacrifice themselves for the queen's offspring, which therefore improves the probability of survival. Is this kindness? I would argue that no, this isn't kindness. This is a response hardwired into ants genetically, and therefore is an unconscious action. This then raises the question: can kindness be considered kindness if it is unconscious? In a strict sense, no, it can't, as the traditional meaning of kindness is purposeful, and with no clear benefit to the self. My definition, therefore, of kindness would be "a conscious action taken to improve another's circumstance, mood or situation, with no benefit to the self". Some argue, (Socrates, for example) that all actions have some benefit to the self, whether conscious or unconscious. If one gives money to charity, one reason they do it (however indirectly) is because it makes them feel they have lived a more fulfilled life, which is a goal for all humans. This is a branch of psychological egoism, which implies the death of altruism, and therefore of the ability of humans genuinely to embody the construct of "kindness".

Even with this striking portrayal of our nature, humans do not always act consciously to their benefit. However, I would reinforce that by saying unconsciously we are always striving for our improvement. Even if one accepts that all actions have some benefit to the self, actions can still be compassionate and friendly, but perhaps not "kind" in the strictly technical sense. These senses and emotions are universal, and can be felt by other forms of life. However, I would claim that kindness is a human construct which aims to engender compassionate, selfless actions, perhaps to restrict negative actions in times past, and serves as a template for ultimate "morality". In this interpretation, kindness is a construct, but one created for the benefit of society. Ultimately, society is a better place when people strive to be "kind", and society suffers when dominated by selfish motives.

Phoebe, Lower VI (Year 12)
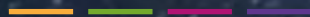
Is space exploration kind to our planet?

Christina, Upper III (Year 7)

For over 60 years humans have been exploring the vastness of space, but is this exploration kind to the Earth? This passage will explore whether or not space exploration is kind to the planet by looking at its benefits and disadvantages.

Space exploration enables humans to send up satellites and see the Earth on a larger scale. This means that humans are able to see the effects of global warming, which can then be monitored. More than 50% of climate data comes from satellites. There are also recent missions investigating destroying any comets or space debris that pose a threat to the Earth.

Despite these benefits, space exploration has its downsides. Billions of pounds are spent in creating and sending spacecraft into space. All of this money could be spent on tackling other causes. Additionally, tons of greenhouse gases are emitted into the atmosphere when spacecraft are launched. These trap heat in the atmosphere and cause air pollution. By launching spacecraft, the ozone layer is also depleted, meaning that more heat from the sun's rays hits Earth's surface.

Overall, space exploration can be kind to Earth by enabling humans to see the major damages of global warming and think on a planetary scale. However, each time a spacecraft is launched, long-lasting effects such as air pollution, depletion of the ozone layer and space junk are created, which harm the planet.

What does kindness look like to you

Kindness is something we can't see. It goes into the body. Like if someone is hurt you could pick them up and you could tell a teacher and if someone is stuck you can help them. I think it floats around like a red balloon, it bounces from one to another, it floats like a butterfly and that is what I think kindness is.

Kindness is being caring and supporting your friends, parents, cousins and those in need, like people who live on the streets. It is also not just about being kind, it can also mean being liberal and would you be lovely enough to give your loved ones cards or neighbours some baked cakes. Some examples of what you can do are: give baked cakes, buns, cookies, cards, postcards, some sweet-smelling flowers etc.

Kiara, Upper I (Year 4)
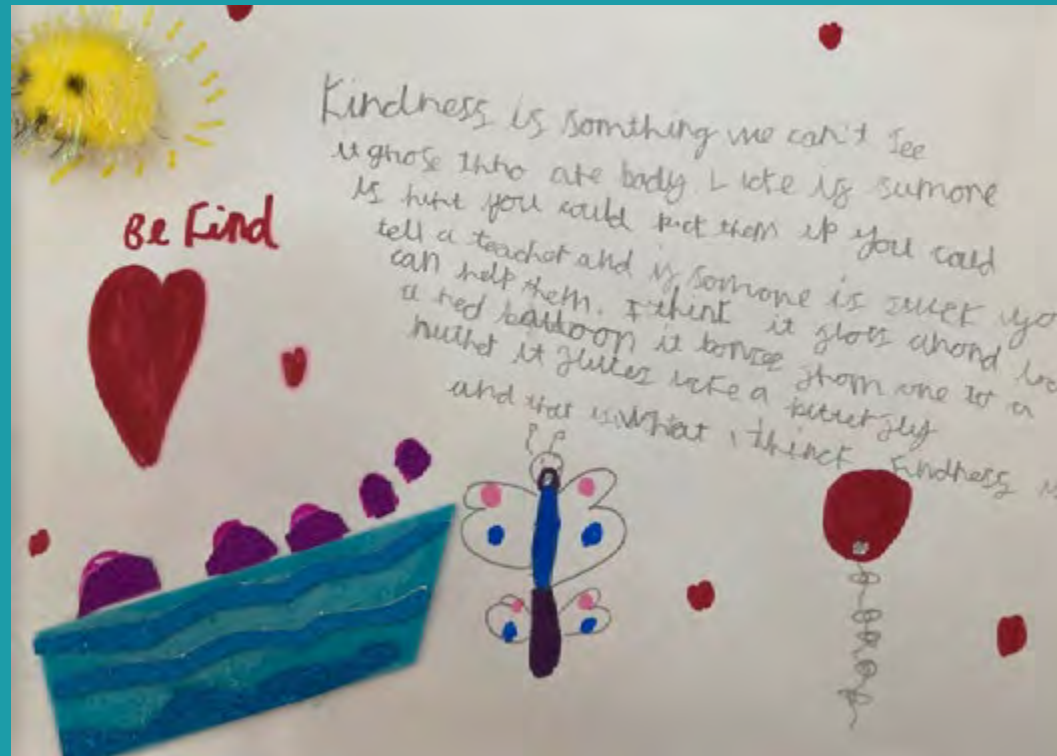
Inclusivity

Inclusivity demonstrates kindness by ensuring that people of all backgrounds and cultures are accepted in society. This makes others feel welcome in the community, in addition to recognising that others' feelings, values, or opinions are valid. It is very important to make sure that everybody is included in group activities and that nobody is left out. We should make everybody feel welcome and included, especially the ones that are new to somewhere, someplace and country. We should respect everybody and include everybody.

Atisha, Upper II (Year 5)

Kindness playing in my ears

Jemimah, Lower V (Year 10)

When approaching this article I thought about other music articles I have read, with lists of songs that reference joy, cities of the world or times of night. Nearly all of which mainly included songs from eras when I wasn't alive, let alone knowing the ins and outs of the top 100 charts. So for this article, I have chosen to write about songs that I know best, from an era of music I am very much aware of and interested in. As well as this I am going to navigate through it in the best way I know…

[Presses shuffle on a Spotify playlist titled 'Kindness playing in my ears'.]

[The familiar choir sings 'maybe we can find a place to feel good' as the banner playing the song appears at the bottom of the screen.]

Yes, you should have guessed it as soon as you saw the title of this article, I will be writing about Harry Styles' Treat People With Kindness. Not only was this song on the album that had the biggest British male artist first week since Eric Clapton in 1992, but the music video for the song has 43 million views. However, the amount of records the song broke or how many streams it has (148,874,904 - and counting) doesn't matter. What really matters is the message the song is spreading. My personal favourite lyric is 'find a place to feel good'. I think it is really important to feel good and happy where you are in life as well as physically, surrounding yourself with people who are kind and generally care for you.

This song is the musical version of Harry's message: he frequently speaks about being comfortable and happy at his concerts, understanding that not everyone feels this way in life. So wanting to create a safe space at his live shows is really important to him. In the Fine Line era much of his merch was labelled with the phrase 'treat people with kindness' and it has continued to be a big part of his brand. Although it's not my favourite on the album (To Be So Lonely and Fine Line are, for those wondering) this song will automatically make me dance and features on my happy music playlist. If you haven't listened I recommend you should but don't get distracted by the rousing drums and major piano and try to focus on the lyrics. There are some really good lines.

[Piano accompanied by whistling crescendos into my headphones.]

Selena Gomez is not just a pop star and actor but a mental health advocate. She is someone who has struggled with health issues and anxiety and she is using her platform to promote this along with the importance of spreading kindness. Selena has spoken with Jill Biden on the importance of mental health at the White House. And she has brought out an Apple documentary, which features the song of the same name (and personally one of my favourite by her): My Mind & Me. It is about her journey with mental health and fame. Kill Em With Kindness, the song I selected for this playlist, is an upbeat bop, and the main message of the song is that instead of retaliating and responding in harmful ways to bad behaviour, be kind. Best said in this lyric: 'put down the weapons you fight with, and kill 'em with kindness'. It shows people how they should be better than they are being treated, even when that is hard, and not fall to the level of others who are not being kind. Personally, this has got to be one of my favourite Selena songs and it comes from her first solo album Revival. The album has themes of moving on and improving yourself to step away from the drama and be a better person and this song is the epitome of that message.

[The music pauses before a calmer song starts with piano chords playing over a backing track.]

As a massive Taylor Swift fan it was essential to find a Taylor Swift song that would fit into this playlist and arjorie immediately came to mind. Compared to the two songs I have mentioned before this song doesn't have kindness in the title and it could even be argued it barely mentions kindness. However, this one lyric illustrates a beautiful thought: 'never be so kind, you forget to be clever, never

be so clever you forget to be kind'. There is something really powerful in this lyric and everytime I hear it I find myself pausing the song to reflect on it. It is about being clever enough to see who is truly there for you and is your friend but not being too clever you forget that you should be kind to everybody and I hope people resonate with this. Taylor wrote about her grandmother, someone who she admires and wishes she knew more about. Marjorie is about knowing how to be kind to others. 'Never be so polite, you forget your power' is another lyric where the listener is encouraged to find a balance so you are not self sabotaging yourself while you just please others, a message I think we all need to hear sometimes. In the end Marjorie wraps up to be a song about not just being kind to others but being kind to yourself. It is a great example of finding a deeper meaning in a song after you take the time to look. Taylor always has amazing lyrics and I recommend the album this song is on, evermore, and its sister album folklore for heart-wrenching lyrics that have more meaning than they might seem on the surface.

[The iconic riff of many people's favourite TV show theme song starts playing.]

The next song not only reminds us that all we want to do is hang out with the characters of FRIENDS but also reminds us what good friends do. I'll Be There For You is the iconic theme tune for one of my personal favourite TV Shows: FRIENDS. It perfectly sums up the series and is so good I rarely skip the intro as I have too much fun singing along. It's a great song about friendship and what good friends do, and while it might not necessarily explicitly refer to kindness, the idea of being there for those you care about is most definitely a kind act. The song might predate me but being from a show I love definitely means it qualifies for this list and I honestly could not miss it off. So while you are singing along and pointing out your favourite scenes in the intro, maybe also take the time to think about the lyrics. How can we do simple acts for our friends that can lift them up and improve a bad day?

And, just as they close the episodes on FRIENDS with this song, I would also like to end my playlist with it, leaving you with some great songs that show how kindness, quite rightly, infiltrates our culture. Please take them as song recommendations, but also as constant reminders of the need for more kindness in our world.

The common language used around kindness

Lottie, Upper III (Year 7)

Hello. ¡Hola! Bonjour. Hallo.

Modern foreign languages: a department that has always been relevant, interesting and evolving. Modern foreign languages are a diverse and exciting area that anyone can be a part of. Another thing that anyone can be part of is kindness. Kindness can range from massive gestures such as calling someone who you know is going through a hard time and giving them the words of encouragement that they need, to just smiling at someone.

Being randomly kind decreases stress, depression and anxiety. When you are kind to someone, you and the person you are being kind to get a flood of endorphins and serotonin (hormones that make you feel happy and less stressed). If someone else sees you being kind, they get a rush of the same hormones and are more likely to pass on the kindness. Kindness is a chain reaction. Kindness is contagious.

'One kind word can warm thee for three winter months, while vile talk wounds like bitter cold in June' - Japanese Proverb.

So how is kindness reflected in different languages? Language is used to acquire, understand and teach new knowledge and to make sense of your emotions. Therefore, the language used around kindness has a direct impact on how you think about kindness and emotions in general.

If you speak a different language to somebody else then you probably express feelings through language slightly differently. This is all due to Historical Linguistics, Sociolinguistics and Psycholinguistics. In other words, how language has changed due to historical events, how society changes language and the thought process of different cultures.

In English, kindness is often referred to as being selfless, caring, compassionate and unconditionally kind. In French, kindness is often referred to as benevolence, pleasantness, softness and consideration. In Spanish, kindness is often referred to as help, notice, graciousness, attention and thoughtfulness. In German, kindness is often referred to as friendliness, quality, sweetness and politeness.

The etymology of the common words used around kindness is equally interesting. Kindness itself originates from Old English 'kyndness' meaning nation and 'kin' meaning one's family, race or relations. However, this evolved to mean 'courtesy of noble deeds,' and now has evolved to mean the characteristic of being friendly, generous and considerate. Sympathique (French) has late Latin and Greek roots. Amabilidad (Spanish) comes from the Latin word 'amabilitas.'

The best part (in my opinion) of kindness in modern foreign languages is the diverse range of people that you can understand and communicate with in more depth because of your wider understanding of languages and cultures.

Can kindness be cultural?

To some extent, yes. In Spain, people tend to talk to each other more, people go outside more due to the hot weather in Spain. It is socially acceptable to go up to a stranger and ask how they are feeling and many people know their neighbours. However, in England, this is not the case. Could kindness be affected by the weather?

In Germany, Gemülichkeit means warmth but goes deeper than that. It is the sense of belonging, social acceptance and well-being. People from Germany are often described as direct or abrupt but they have just the right balance between that and kindness, helpfulness and honesty. Kindness in different cultures could be impacted by social conventions. Social conventions are the expectations and boundaries set by society.

'A foreign swear word is partially inoffensive except to the person who has learnt it early in life and knows its social limits.' - Paul Theroux

The Abbey Learner Profile includes many qualities that are central to both kindness and language study. Clearly, **communication** is necessary in language. With that comes **care** and **reflection**, both of which are very important in both language and kindness. Reflection is used to perform linguistic acquisition, understand language and teach language. Care is very fitting to kindness in language: care is often associated with kindness, and is needed in language. **Risk-taking** - it takes a lot of courage to speak to a native speaker in the language that you are learning. However, it shows respect and no one is going to dislike you for trying to learn their mother tongue. The importance of **thinking** is crystal clear with most things and it is no exception for modern foreign languages. **Principles** and **open-mindedness** go hand-in-hand and play a big role in kindness as well as language. It is important to be principled when learning a new language because when you get to speak it to a native speaker you need to know their social conventions or you could deeply offend them. Being open-minded is extremely important when learning a new language: you have to be open-minded to the new language itself, new culture, different social conventions, new types of food, different types of people, new music, new environments and so many more.
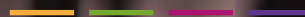
'That best portion of a good man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.'

- William Wordsworth.

Kindness in music

Ivana, Upper III (Year 7)

I think kindness matters in music because I think that it is one of the core parts in making a team, an ensemble skill. Kindness breaks down barriers, aids communication and supports excellent relationships.

If group members are not kind to each other, then friendships could crumble. Although that might not affect the band / ensemble / orchestra physically, it could really harm people's feelings from the inside: if nobody is happy and the members keep trying to spite each other, they won't play as well as they could. I have enjoyed myself immensely playing my bassoon in groups and I think that everyone who tries should have the same experience as me. Music is built on trust, and kindness leads to that trust. Music is where creative people channel versions of themselves and express themselves through the music they produce and play. As a result, it's very important to meet them with kindness. I particularly remember that recently I was in orchestra, alone in the bassoon section, and there was a girl sitting next to me. I think she was in sixth form and she played the oboe or the clarinet. She kindly explained things to me and pointed me in the right direction when I needed it and I am really grateful to her. I think this is how groups and teams should work: all of us helping each other. In conclusion, kindness really matters in music and as a team we should always help and trust each other. Here are some quotations about kindness:

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

-Maya Angelou

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

-Leo Buscaglia

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

-Aesop

I've written a quotation too:

"Kindness doesn't cost a penny. But with a single kind word or smile, you're changing people's lives, even the world, bit by bit."

What is the kindest invention?

A hug is the kindest invention because it makes people feel comfortable and it shows you really care.

Evie, Upper I (Year 4)

I think the wheelchair is the kindest invention because it shows that people care about others people with a disability.

Aheli, Upper I (Year 4)

I think the kindest invention is a hearing aid because if you cannot hear properly it helps you to hear people and sounds.

Zuleyha, Upper I (Year 4)

The kindest invention is diversity, we are all different and that's what makes us special. We can be kind in different ways.

Rehat, Upper I (Year 4)

I think the kindest invention might have been penicillin.

Penicillin is sort of kind because penicillin can be used to make soap (for the cutlery and the dishes) and kill other types of bacteria. Penicillin can also be used as a medicine for throat disease and other bad infections.

Lucia, Lower III (Year 6)

I think that the "kindest" invention was the telephone. That is because it gave us people a chance to communicate. I also think that It helped people who were in universities or away from family to connect with the people they love. That made sure that no matter how far you are from one-another, you can talk to whoever you want to talk to. From then on, people no longer had to sit side-by-side to talk. They could be miles away and not waste valuable time travelling from one place to another. It led to the invention of the mobile phone, which was even better. This changed the way nearly all people lived their lives and made them be able to communicate when they are in different homes, cities, countries and more. This is how the telephone is a "kind" invention - it helps people stay connected, be in touch and communicate.

Neave, Lower III (Year 6)

I think the see-saw is the kindest invention because it includes everyone and can't be worked properly without 2 people and shows how everyone gets included. Also, it is great fun for people to play with and you can make new friends.

Anneliese, Lower III (Year 6)

The kindest invention is the one that has made the most positive impact on today's life and has had the most success.

The legendary invention of antibiotics, e.g. Penicillin

Antibiotics is by far the kindest invention. When people could afford medicine, it helped save a lot of lives which in turn caused relatives and friends to rejoice in their happiness. This invention is so successful because it is still in our daily lives today, and is used much of the time nowadays.

In 1928 Alexander Fleming, a Scottish physician discovered 'penicillin'.

Before Dr Fleming's invention, people used drugs to cure them, which in fact just made the matter worse. When penicillin was invented, doctors finally had a way to miraculously save lives and cure bacteria and diseases. The discovery of penicillin was one of the most important inventions of medical history. Thanks to penicillin, deaths from diseases are now one-twentieth of what they were before this life-saving invention was discovered. Fun fact: Dr Fleming accidentally discovered penicillin!

The first patient to use penicillin was Constable Albert Alexander, who caught a deadly disease named sepsis after pricking himself while cropping roses in his garden.

Printing Press

The printing press was one of the kindest inventions as it helped people around the world and gave people from lesser backgrounds the same opportunities as the people with better opportunities. Back in the days, the resources needed to read and write were only available to the rich and upper middle class but when the printing press was invented, this became accessible to everyone. When this came to the market this greatly impacted the world as the printing press helped expand the number of people who could read and write. It could be argued that this was one of the kindest inventions as it helped bring a change to society and made people more equal from an educational standpoint.

Margaret, Upper II (Year 5)

Fire. Although it is dangerous, I'm grateful for it. Without it, the first humans wouldn't have been able to get food or water. Food because they would need to cook it, and water to boil the water to get the dirt out. Without water, we wouldn't be here today, so I'm grateful for Fire.

Thimuthu, Upper II (Year 5)

I think the kindest invention is electric cars because you can be social without affecting the environment and it is a quicker way to travel.

Hiba, Upper I (Year 4)

The kindest invention is a plane because it is how people in Turkey get medical care and help from around the world.

Rosa, Upper I (Year 4)

How did xenia encourage kindness amongst the Greeks?

Kate, Upper VI (Year 13)

Xenia is the Ancient Greek principle of hospitality, a concept far removed from our modern-day standards, but very much necessary in a world in which staying at an inn was fraught with danger of abduction, theft and even murder. Literally 'guest-friendship', ξενια is a moral obligation demanding that shelter, gifts, food etc be granted to any stranger who asks for them, regardless of their background.

The concept of xenia is rooted into the etymology of the word. It hails from the Greek word xenos (ξενος), which has a variety of meanings, including stranger, foreigner, host, guest or friend. This forms the idea central to xenia: that a stranger is equated to a friend - Ancient Greek travel was almost the antithesis to 'don't talk to strangers'! To the modern ear, it may seem astonishing that such a level of trust could be established between two strangers, but xenia relies on a central ingredient of the Greek psyche: their piety. Zeus, protector of travellers, was the divine embodiment of hospitality, so in the Greeks' eyes disrespecting this custom was a direct assault on the king of the gods, and risked incurring divine wrath. Throughout Greek literature there are examples of theoxenia, where a god would appear under a mortal guise at a person's home rewarding those who honoured xenia well. In Metamorphoses VIII, we see Jupiter and Mercury (disguised as mortals) taken in by an impoverished couple, Baucis and Philemon.

Unlike their disrespectful neighbours, the pair welcome the two divinities kindly into their home, feeding them most generously, despite their overt poverty. After revealing their true identities, the two gods reward them generously, turning their house into a temple in return for their piety. Xenia therefore goes beyond a friendly welcome: it is treatment worthy of the divine.

Central to Greek hospitality is a complete lack of discrimination. One of the main rules surrounding xenia is that the host must grant the guest a meal and a wash before asking any questions as to their background or who they are. A prime example of this is in Odyssey VI, when Nausicaa welcomes Odysseus, who has been shipwrecked on the remote island of Phaeacia, into her father Alcinous' palace, with no questions asked as to himself and his circumstances. Her kindness and generosity is frankly astonishing to a man she has found windswept and naked in the wood whilst doing her washing. This is precisely what I find interesting about xenia: the reciprocal faith it requires in others. Whilst the host obviously trusts that their guest is non-threatening, the same is true of the guest: they are

entrusting their life into unknown hands. And it is not as if xenia never went wrong, because it frequently did. Take Odysseus himself for example. Prior to his arrival in Phaeacia, he and his men had been taken in by the cyclops Polyphemus, who proceeded to shut them in his cave and eat them one by one. Six were killed before Odysseus came up with a cunning plan of escape. And yet he still relies on xenia for a safe passage home from Phaeacia, purely because he had no other way of returning home to Ithaca. There is a sense of need at the core of xenia: sometimes there is no other option but to receive kindness from others. I think we recognise this to an extent today, but for the Ancient Greeks it goes beyond recognition: it is the centre of a functioning society. Kindness is not an option, but an obligation: not honouring it is an offence punishable by the gods. So I think if you take away anything from this article, perhaps consider how much we value self-sufficiency in this modern age. Would we not be more unified as a society if we relied on others just slightly more?
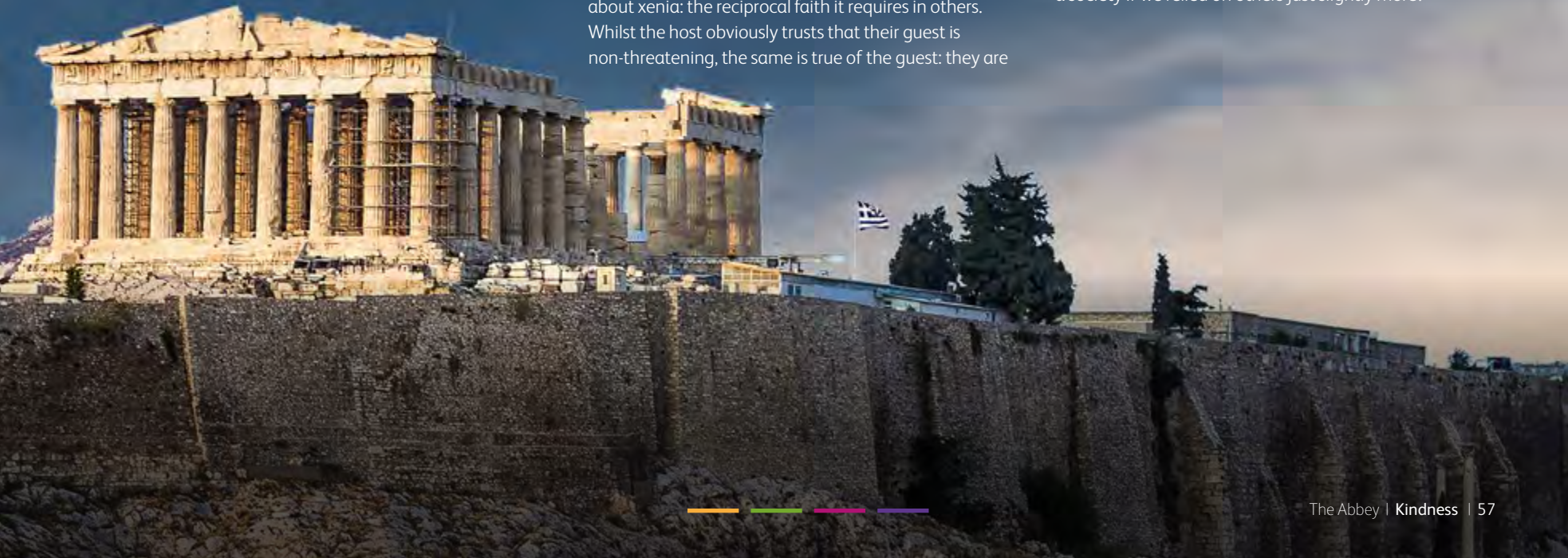
Senior Gallery
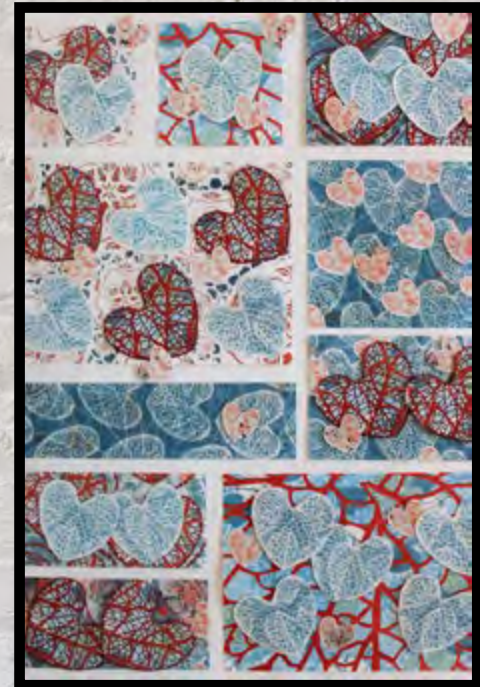
Why is art the kindest form of expression?

Monica, Lower V (Year 10)

Art serves as a companion of comfort and distraction, a form of communication everyone can express. Art doesn't necessarily require a particular skill: in fact it's something anyone can participate in. It allows people to envision a whole realm prioritised around their desires and interests. It gives people the chance to express what they can not obtain in words, what they can not possibly write down, nor what they can say out loud. Art provides an alternative pathway giving us freedom and feelings of exhilaration, releasing us from any possible restraints or isolation that we feel in the current moment.

"The world of reality has its limits;
the world of imagination is boundless."
Jean-Jacques Rousseau

This is the reason why I believe art is the kindest form of expression.

Art enforces kindness. Art itself can potentially be interpreted as a definition for kindness. It revolves around everything and everyone with unlimited extents as to what art can be. Life itself is an art-form. It envelopes itself within music, through dancing, acting, stories and so many other things. But most significantly it thrives within everything that lives. It requires the minds of others, each individual thought, for art to be created, before being seen by others as they relate or find relief and comfort in the art.

Furthermore, it conveys emotions and portrays stories many of which are filled with pain and suffering. Art is able to help heal those wounds by allowing people to express the anguish and sorrow they feel or experience. Additionally, art has the ability to manipulate our understanding of time and existence, questioning and deepening our individual thoughts. This itself is a gift sent from art as it allows us to live in the moment and not to feel apprehensive about the future or the past.

Statistically speaking, art is able to boost confidence, helping with engagement and resilience. It aids people with depression, anxiety and reduces stress, improving mood and mental health. Art is able to stimulate the release of dopamine, a chemical to make us feel happier, content and satisfied. This is why art is the kindest form of expression: it increases the mind's welfare and creativity, stretching it to its potential, which as a result assists in all other aspects and elements of life.

"Creativity is a drug I cannot live without."
Cecil B. DeMille

Humans constantly search for a purpose by creating problems to solve. Art is able to solve those countless problems simply because it is the kindest form of expression.

Who is the kindest fictional character?

I think the Browns are the kindest because they took Paddington in. They shared their things with him and they are selfless. The Browns gave him a bed to sleep in and they gave him marmalade and water.

Kaira, Upper Prep (Year 2)

Snow White is the kindest character because she looks after the dwarves. She cooks for them and she is kind to them. She is thoughtful and generous and she helps the animals.

Maya, Upper Prep (Year 2)

The character I think is the kindest is Miss Honey. She is listening and she is so loving and extremely caring towards Matilda. She protects Matilda from Miss Trunchbull.

Georgie, Upper Prep (Year 2)

I choose Miss Honey because Miss Honey helps Matilda to be brave and to learn. She takes care of her because she is away from her parents. Miss Honey helps people. She plays with her and gives her food.

Sofia, Upper Prep (Year 2)

I have chosen Tin Tin as the kindest character, because he includes other people like Captain Haddock through his journeys. He is helpful because he helped his dog, Snowy when he broke his leg on a rock on the moon. He is also generous because he lent his boat to another person and they worked together to escape the sharks. In the book set in the jungle, he gave all the cheeky monkeys bananas. He is also a good listener because he listens for the instructions for the moon.

Sylvia, Upper Prep (Year 2)

The character I think is the kindest is Peter Rabbit because he is very loving. He gets vegetables for his family.

Naomi, Upper Prep (Year 2)

"Be kind wherever possible.
It is always possible."

— Dalai Lama

What is 'kindness'? The quality of being friendly, generous and considerate – essentially the recipe for being a good person. So, in what ways can people be kind?

Whatever your situation, it is always possible to be kind. Even small actions can light up someone's day and can be a token of kindness for others. Always be kind and compassionate. As soon as one person is kind, it creates a virtuous circle, which, if it remained unbroken, would see the world's population being kind to all beings. What goes around comes around.

Be kind to yourself and your body: by exercising, eating healthily, enjoying the beauty of nature, having a positive attitude and spending time with people you love. Help people who are less fortunate: the homeless, those affected by war and people with disabilities or disadvantages in life. Most importantly be kind to everyone: always be inclusive, truthful and respectful. Happiness can be spread by celebrating differences and success.

As an individual, there are a multitude of ways to show kindness. These range from a small gesture like smiling, sharing and being polite, to significant acts of kindness. An example of this is a firefighter who runs into a burning building to save a stranger's life at great personal risk.

Ways to offer kindness in our community include: donating money, resources, time and effort to charities, collaborating well within groups, fostering/adopting, and engaging with those who are lonely or have unfavourable circumstances.

At a national level, kindness can be expressed by paying tax to provide resources, for communal welfare and mental health support. An example of this is the NHS, which we are very lucky to have as a free health service keeping our nation healthy.

At international level, we work together to protect our planet, look after the environment, recycle, plant more trees, become more energy efficient, waste less and lead a simpler lifestyle. Also, people can provide food, medicine and care packages for those suffering from natural disasters/wars/illnesses.

Being kind brings numerous benefits. By being kind to others, it brings joy to both the receiver and the giver, resulting in reduced stress and anxiety. It also stimulates the production of serotonin, which aids relaxation and heals wounds. It increases oxytocins which reduces blood pressure and makes people feel more love. It releases endorphins which reduces pain. Being kind promotes positivity, inspiration, confidence and good energy. Relationships strengthen and people become more motivated and productive. Overall, it promotes everybody's physical and mental health.

With modern technology, unkind messages can be sent via social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok etc.) Ways to be kind on socials include complimenting people on their work or avoiding commenting if unsure whether the message is kind. Be considerate before acting or ask a friend how they would react if the message was sent to them.

In a social situation, it is always important to be fair. For example, if a friend were to steal a pencil from someone else, do not:

A) Be a bystander and watch it happen

B) Ignore it

C) Be biased towards the friend even if they committed the wrongdoing.

It is always more important to do what is right, not what is easiest: by standing up to someone, whether a friend or not.

It is amazing that there is a designated World Kindness Day, which was recently celebrated on 13 November 2022. Although this day matters, it is very important to make a special effort to be kind every day, in order to make the world a better place for everyone. Kindness is free to give but priceless to receive.

As per the Dalai Lama's philosophy: "Be kind wherever possible. It is always possible."

Ella, Upper III (Year 7)

The interlace of kindness and duty

Harshini, Upper IV (Year 9)

Some say that kindness is a language, known by humans all over the world and shared without a second thought. Others say that kindness is an obligation to humanity: if we're not kind, then the entire world may collapse. But as I see it, kindness is what binds us together and unites us in the face of adversity. It makes people share the same perspective and learn more about each other, potentially changing each other's lives. Afterall, humans evolve by learning.

Kindness is a value, often shown in kid's shows. A show that may come to mind is *My Little Pony*, or more specifically, the sweet, warm-hearted Fluttershy. She represents the element of kindness, and is often portrayed as a generous and helpful character. We first see this when the main characters are confronted by a Manticore, a beast with the head of a human, body of a lion and the tail of a scorpion. Whilst the others fight with brute strength, Fluttershy is shown asking the others to 'wait'. She is not heard, until finally, the others give up and she gets a turn. After Fluttershy soothes the beast by removing a splinter from its paw, Twilight Sparkle, another pony, asks how Fluttershy knew that the Manticore was injured. She replies with 'I didn't. Sometimes we all need to be shown a little kindness.'

A popular quotation about kindness is "Kindness is something anyone can give without losing anything themselves." Personally, I think this idea is very important, especially when it comes to being kind to people who are facing tough situations. Before, when I was in primary school, I met a younger individual who was struggling with her homework and wasn't able to understand how to do it. Since I had some free time, I decided to help her and she ended up getting full marks and thanking me. Some may say that I was being kind at that moment, but others may argue that it was my duty to help her as an older figure.

Duty implies an obligation to others, an action that you must do no matter what would happen to you. For example, it is a citizen's duty to uphold the law and set an example for younger generations. It is also important to consider that duty changes according to different people: a person may decide to visit their sick grandmother, even though they don't have to; they do this because they care for their grandmother and think of it as their duty. The grandmother, however, might say that it is the granddaughter being kind to her. This is where duty and kindness start to interweave.

Kindness is spoken about a lot in humanity lessons, but we are never taught how to recognise if somebody is being kind or not. When we are younger, we are congratulated for being kind and get special awards. But at some point, kindness becomes a duty and disregarded for what it truly is, a display of how much we have evolved. For a long time scientists have studied chimpanzee behaviour, given that they are close relatives to humans.. Now, scientists are starting to consider the Bonobo (Pan paniscus).

Bonobos are kind and do not discriminate against each other. Female bonobos have been seen taking care of infants who are not part of their herd. This is not seen in chimpanzees, who would have killed the infant as a show of power. Even though bonobos are similar to chimpanzees in terms of genetics, they have evolved their social systems enough to understand that fighting each other leads to nothing, but being kind goes a long way.

Likewise, people accept kindness as a duty that should be upheld, a practice that should be taught to all. An African proverb known by many echoes this idea:

'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'

Kindness is a duty that links us all together. If we want to progress further, then kindness is the way to go.

"Kindness is something anyone can give without losing anything themselves."

Why is it kind to be internationally minded?

Being internationally minded is kind because you are thinking about other cultures and celebrating with them. For example, in assembly even if you're not religious you still bow your head to be kind and not disrespect those who do follow the religion - so yes it is kind to be internationally minded because you are celebrating different cultures with all the different people around you and finding out lots of cool new things, trying new foods, learning new languages and loads more. After all, no one's the same, are they?

Anneliese, Lower III (Year 6)

It is kind to be internationally minded because if you are internationally minded then you are accepting and respecting other people's religions, culture, home country and colour of their skin. If you are internationally minded then you would respect other people and you would collaborate with them. If that were to happen, then it would be possible to avoid a lot of wars. If you are internationally minded in another way, you and others can work together to save the environment.

Lucia, Lower III (Year 6)

Being internationally minded is kind because you embrace new diversities and get to understand people in a different way. By understanding different people, you can connect with them in many ways, which allows you to make bonds and share a friendship with one another. You can help each other in life and learn new things so that you become a better person. You can gain knowledge from all around the globe and help other people in different ways to match their needs. This is kind because helping others is an act of kindness to show that you respect and understand them.

Aashvi, Lower III (Year 6)

Being internationally minded is kind because people who are going through terrible things will want support. While it expands your knowledge, you can help people who need support to feel happier. Being internationally minded is also kind because you will understand people's differences and their backgrounds which can make people feel happy, joyful and make them feel included. It doesn't matter where they are from.

Isabelle, Upper I (Year 4)

It is kind to be internationally minded because it helps us to work in harmony and together. It is important because it helps give respect to others and encourages collaboration, but also to show empathy to other people.

Huihui, Upper I (Year 4)

International mindedness enables us to work in harmony with colleagues from around the world and to benefit from a wide range of knowledge and experience.

Rehat, Upper I (Year 4)

It is kind to be internationally minded because it is kind to show respect to other people's customs.

Rosa, Upper I (Year 4)

Why is it kind to learn another language?

It is kind to learn another language because then if someone came to your house and they spoke a different language you would know what they were saying. It is not kind to make someone speak English if they don't already know it.

Rosa, Upper I (Year 4)

It is kind to lean another language because you show that you're interested in the world around you and you also respect the country or place you are in. Also, you can communicate with different people.

Alison, Upper I (Year 4)

I think it is kind to learn another language because if you go to a country and say something random you might offend someone.

Hiba, Upper I (Year 4)

If you learn another language you can learn one's mother tongue and help them translate to a different language.
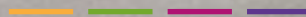
Rehat, Upper I (Year 4)

It is kind to learn another language because you are showing your teacher or person who taught you respect and that you have listened to what they have said. You are also showing interest which makes the person happy.

Mina, Upper I (Year 4)

The universality of the language of kindness

Savia, Lower VI (Year 12)

Languages: it's hard to pinpoint exactly what one is, or to describe exactly what suffices as a language. We can simplify them into being some form, which communicates information from one person to another. However, the way in which different languages can be understood varies from form to form.

There are certain shades of meaning that are lost when translating from one language to another, and meanings that are misinterpreted. Say two people speak the same language. The dictionary meaning of the words can be understood, but the complete meaning of a phrase is utterly reliant on tone and body language. This is where misinterpretations can arise, and it fascinates me that we are able to communicate in such a way that gives our eyeline, or the slight resonance of our voices, such power to express what we mean. How is it that we can communicate so much in a sigh, or in a quick exchange of glances?

The reason that this is so interesting to me is because of the inability to teach how body language is read. There is no set dictionary for body language, no google translate. Yes, there are body language guides, but we do not go out of our way to learn from them; our body language is usually devised as we go. Yet most people are able to gauge more or less how another person feels indirectly, without them explicitly saying it. Or at least to understand subliminal messages through their body language.

Another example of a language for which we do not have a dictionary, or a specific way of teaching, is kindness. Kindness and body language are both understood or at least able to be recognised by everyone. People who otherwise can't communicate can share moments solely through their actions of kindness, such as giving up a seat to an elderly person on a bus.

There are people in the world who go out of their way to help others: google acts of kindness and countless lists of people who have done so appear. Go onto news websites, and they may have a section specifically dedicated to 'Acts of Kindness' inundated with person after person who just wants to do good. I wonder if these people acted in such a way to get their minute of fame on the news, or if they really just wanted to be kind? The latter is how kindness is really measured. Kindness is "marked by acts of generosity, consideration, without expecting praise or reward in return." That final line is key: the lack of expectation of reward is what counts as kindness. This provokes the question - does an act of kindness count if we expect something in return? Maybe the other person

will never know about our kindness, so perhaps it does not really interfere with the action itself. Or on the contrary, one can argue that this motivation makes all the difference. But how can we tell?

This brings into question the universality of kindness. Is it superficially understood by all, but completely by none? Or is it that someone's own interpretation of an act of kindness is really what matters? For instance, someone could do something unintentionally kind, acting only unconsciously, but this could then be interpreted by someone else as an active expression of kindness. Does this remove its value, or only make that person kinder - as they are acting kindly without thinking?

One would assume that if kindness became known as a language of its own we would be taught it in schools as we are French or German. In an alternate world would we have a double period of the language of kindness every week?

When kindness prevails: what is the greatest story ever told?

Phoebe, Lower IV (Year 8)

Though there have been many extraordinary stories told, there are a few that really catch the eye. A story that I find extremely brave and kind is that of Araminta Ross, who we now know as Harriet Tubman. Harriet was born in 1822 to an enslaved family in Maryland, USA. She and her family were 'owned' by the Brodess family. During this time people thought that enslaved people were property they owned.

Harriet began working alongside her family at only five years old. She would normally be lent to neighbours to help them with whatever they needed doing. She was treated unfairly by whoever was in charge of her. When she turned twelve she began backbreaking work in the fields.

In her late 20s in 1849, she managed to escape by herself to Pennsylvania. Nobody knows exactly how she got to Pennsylvania but it is likely that she would have used the 'underground railroad', which was a secret network for slaves. Inside this network conductors would direct slaves to hiding places or stations to help them to get to freedom in the north. It is thought that it was during her time in the railroad that she changed her name to Harriet Tubman, most likely to cover her escape.

When she arrived in Philadelphia she soon found work and made friends, but she was not completely safe yet. Slave catchers patrolled the area and commissioners were instructed to return any runaway slaves to their owners. Luckily, Harriet was never discovered. Over the next eleven years she made approximately 19 round trips through the underground. It is believed that she rescued 70 slaves, including the majority of her remaining family. Throughout her lifetime it is thought that she saved around 300 slaves.

I think this story shows extreme kindness and courage as everytime she went in and out of the underground railroad she was at great risk of getting caught. But she was very brave and persevered and helped to improve the lives of over 300 people.

Poems

It is great to be kind,
Never leave it behind,
Kindness helps you,
I will give you a clue,
If you try to be kind,
You shall never be blind,
If you try it,
You will not regret it a bit,
It is great to be kind,
Never leave it behind,
Try your best,
And it will give you rest,
If someone is kind to you,
You should be it too,
It is the most amazing thing,
You will feel like a king!
It is great to be kind,
Never leave it behind,

Neave, Lower III (Year 6)

Kindness is the greatest gift that someone
could give,
By being kind, by showing acts of kindness,
It will spread it all around us,
To change the world into a better place.

- Peipei, Lower III (Year 6)

Kindness can be hard at the very start
It can be tough when your day is rough
No one smiles or wants to take part
Do one nice thing and that is enough
No matter how sadness makes you
feel apart
Every piece of kindness can lift you
out of a huff
Sharing kindness makes it grow in
your heart
Suddenly your day is better because
kindness is enough

Sophie, Upper II (Year 5)

Kind hearts are the gardens,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the flowers,
Kind deeds are the fruits.
Take care of your garden,
And keep out the weeds.
Fill it with sunshine,
Kind words and kind deeds.

Mayowa, Upper II (Year 5)

I can choose to be kind,
Each and every day.
I can choose to be kind,
To everyone, in every way.

Kindness is a friendly wave,
A simple present I just gave.
It's the way I say thank you,
And the nice things to do.

Kindness is…
A bowl of popcorn
Because it's meant to be shared.

To myself, I promise,
To act and speak with kindness.
So every day I will be
The very best version of me!

Jocelyn, Lower III (Year 6)

Kindness can be big or small.
It can be just a smile - just don't be cruel.

Do a good deed every day,
Like helping your friend sculpt with clay.

You only have one lifetime so try
your very best,

To be kind and grateful every moment
of every day.

Zifei, Lower I (Year 3)

Kindness is the key to your life
Kindness is a smile on your face
Kindness is when you help someone in need
Kindness is not always been seen, it can be
felt by the heart
Kindness is everything

Lyra, Lower I (Year 3)

Find some kindness
In your mind

Share it around
*With a lot of sound

To find some love
Get a happy feeling from all above

Throw kindness like confetti
Throw them in plenty

Find some kindness
In your mind

Kindness is all about….
Cause and not applause!
*and a lot of sound - laughter and giggles
and happy cheering talks and happiness

Aashvi, Lower III (Year 6)

Junior Gallery

The Abbey

www.theabbey.co.uk