

# Introducing the Thrive Approach



Let's help every child

**thrive** 

"Thrive has completely changed our school. We know now that our children love to come to school; they like learning. That's had a massive impact on attainment because children can now access their thinking brains."

Teacher, South West

"The Thrive training I have had is genuinely the best CPD I have had since qualifying as a teacher."

Teacher, East Midlands

"The Thrive training was very enlightening. It showed me just how powerful the practical tasks can be when working with teenagers."

Teacher, London


## Thrive...

a specific way of working with **all** children that supports healthy social and emotional development. The Thrive Approach® teaches you how to be and what to do, in response to young people's differing and sometimes challenging behaviour, providing targeted strategies and activities to help them re-engage with life and learning.

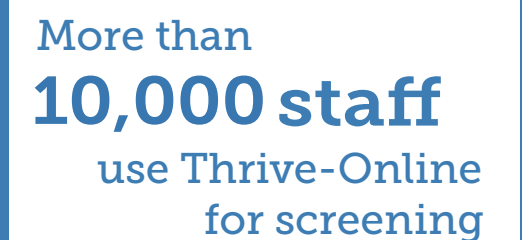


Developed over a 25-year period and first piloted in Devon schools, the Thrive Approach draws on the collective experience of more than 160 years in teaching, education, social work, family therapy, psychotherapy, education advisory and inspection work, general practice and child psychology.

To date, more than 34,000 staff have received Thrive training in the UK and beyond, ensuring approximately 400,000 children and young people have access to the Thrive Approach. They are supported by more than 4,000 Licensed Practitioners and more than 10,000 staff, who use Thrive-Online™ for class or group screening.



Thrive is in over  
**2,800**  
settings



More than  
**10,000 staff**  
use Thrive-Online  
for screening



The Thrive Approach is now  
accessible to approximately  
**400,000**  
children



# What do we do?

Thrive’s vision is of a world in which children’s social and emotional needs are better understood and met. Created to support this vision, the Thrive Approach is a dynamic, developmental and trauma-sensitive approach to meeting the emotional and social needs of children. We now know more than ever before about what helps to develop healthy curious minds and happy confident and creative children. We wish to share this knowledge and work with you and your setting, to enhance the understanding of your staff in how to support children to become more socially and emotionally confident and more engaged with their learning.

The Thrive Approach is informed by established developments in neuroscientific research. It is underpinned by a theoretical base in child development theory, transactional analysis and attachment theory, creativity, play and the arts. At the heart of the Approach lies the understanding that children’s behaviour represents a form of communication – of their underlying needs. If we can recognise and meet these needs,

children are able to flourish and learn. However, if we neglect or ignore these needs, children’s development is likely to be stunted and their learning inhibited. Thrive doesn’t ask what has happened in a child’s past. Thrive asks what they are telling us about their developmental needs and how to address them. The Thrive Approach is designed to equip you with the training and tools you need to help children become ready to learn.

Central to the effectiveness of the Thrive Approach is Thrive-Online, an online assessment, action-planning and measurement tool. Thrive-Online enables you to clearly and systematically identify the social and emotional needs of the children and young people you are working with, and to select targeted actions from a wealth of suggested strategies and activities. Importantly, the action-planning resource allows you to tailor interventions to meet group and individual needs, giving you suggestions on how to be and what to do in order to meet those needs.

## The Thrive Approach provides targeted and measured outcomes for children and young people through:



# What difference does Thrive make?

**The impact Thrive has on children and the communities around them has been evidenced in a number of studies. These include:**

1. Thrive helps to develop resilience in young people. (Hart and Heaver 2015<sup>1</sup>).
2. Thrive closes the gap for vulnerable children across a range of measures including attainment, behaviour, relationships, self-confidence and attendance (McGuire-Snieckus *et al* 2015<sup>2</sup>). A supplementary evaluation was carried out in early 2018 that further supported these findings.
3. Staff using the Thrive Approach feel more equipped to manage behaviour and better able to support more vulnerable children. (Office for Public Management 2013<sup>3</sup>).

Schools that have adopted the Thrive Approach have reported many benefits. These include fewer disruptions in class, reduced exclusions and improved academic results. The knock-on effect of this can be better parent-school relationships and improved staff morale. A few case studies have been included in this brochure, with further case studies available on the Thrive website ([thriveapproach.com](http://thriveapproach.com)).

The impact of Thrive has been picked up by Ofsted during school inspections. Inspectors have commented on the use of Thrive to help manage behaviour more effectively, in particular when used for early intervention, helping students to become open to learning.

The Department for Education is focussed on supporting schools to build whole school environments and develop approaches within which all students can achieve their full potential. A recent review of published policies and information – Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools – was commissioned in response to the Green Paper ‘Transforming children and young people’s mental health provision’. This review included Thrive as an initiative that supports and promotes positive mental health. (DfE 2018<sup>4</sup>).

In addition to building a bank of case studies to show the impact of the Thrive Approach, we are committed to a programme of ongoing research. One study commissioned by Thrive looked at the potential social return on investment (SROI). This SROI research indicated that for every £1 spent the short-term return was £9, rising to £16-22 over the longer term. (Courtney 2013<sup>5</sup>).



<sup>1</sup>Hart A, Heaver B (2015). *Resilience Approaches to Supporting Young People’s Mental Health: Appraising the Evidence Base for Schools and Communities*. Brighton: University of Brighton/Boingboing.

<sup>2</sup>McGuire-Snieckus, Rose, Wood (2015). *Independent Impact Report*. Bath: Bath Spa University.

<sup>3</sup>Office for Public Management (2013). *Therapeutic early interventions to prevent school exclusion and truancy: evaluation of three contemporaneous projects*. London: Office for Public Management.

<sup>4</sup>Department for Education (2018). *Mental Health and wellbeing provision in schools*, October 2018. London: Department for Education.

<sup>5</sup>Courtney P (2013). *Thrive: A Forecast Social Return on Investment (SROI)*. Exeter: White Sail Consultancy.

# How does Thrive work?

Thrive offers an integrated approach for all those who come into regular contact with children and young people. This includes professionals such as headteachers, teachers, teaching assistants, social workers, youth workers, counsellors and medical staff, as well as parents and carers.

The Thrive Approach is delivered through a flexible package designed to suit your needs and setting, including:

- **a range of training options**
- **access to Thrive-Online – the assessment and action-planning tool**
- **ongoing professional development and mentoring support.**

Depending on the package you choose, you will be equipped to implement the Thrive Approach with individuals and/or groups of children and young people, in order to support their social and emotional development at varying levels of intensity.

If you work within a school, you are in a particularly strong position to use Thrive to support the social and emotional development of your pupils - because children spend a third of their time in school. You can incorporate the Approach into the curriculum to meet the social and emotional needs of all your pupils, and you can use Thrive skills and activities to work one-to-one and in small groups with children who need more targeted support.

## What difference does Thrive make for your staff?

**Katie Meyer is a Licensed Practitioner and Deputy Headteacher at Paddock Junior, Infant and Nursery School. This is her perspective:**



Paddock began its Thrive journey six years ago when our learning mentor, Helen Kermani, found out about Thrive training and decided it would be a fantastic way to support our children with their emotional challenges. Since then, she has been running one-to-one and group sessions to help children overcome a range of difficulties from extreme behaviour to being withdrawn and not engaging with any aspect of school life.

The training itself is really enjoyable with a great mix of theory and practical activities. It enables trainees to really get inside the heads of the children they are trying to support and to understand how to attune to them and support them appropriately. The training is also enlightening; it totally changed our approach to the way we teach our children so that we support their emotional wellbeing alongside their academic development.

As members of the Senior Leadership Team, we have been able to really drive the Thrive Approach in our school. This year we have a Thrive section on our School Improvement Plan and a Thrive School Improvement group, consisting of our Thrive Practitioners. This helps to shape the way we would

like Thrive to develop within our school. We have run staff meetings and organised training for lunchtime supervisors and individual sessions for staff who wanted support in adapting their practice. We now have a shared Thrive language that every member of staff is using when dealing with children in the school. The change in our children around school has been fantastic, with noticeably happier and more confident children.

As Thrive has developed, each Key Stage has been running Thrive afternoons. These focus on giving children more opportunities to access specific activities targeting their developmental stage. Each session we teach now has a Thrive objective alongside a learning objective. We are really excited about these changes and hope to see an even greater impact on the children through this new approach to learning.

I feel totally blessed to have discovered Thrive and become a Practitioner. I will work tirelessly to ensure that our school enables our children to become happy, confident, independent and emotionally literate learners.

# Thrive-Online

Underpinning all Thrive practice is the screening, assessment and action-planning tool – Thrive-Online. Through its intuitive and easy-to-use interface, Thrive-Online helps you to:

## 1 Identify emotional needs

Using the profiling function, you can screen all children and young people against age-related expectations. You will produce an emotional/social profile for each class in school and be able to identify those that would benefit from additional support, either as a group or individually.



## 2 Select targeted interventions

Thrive-Online suggests a range of simple, effective strategies and activities for you to choose from that are targeted to meet the child or group's identified needs. These strategies and activities foster positive relationships and are creative and arts-based.



## 3 Create an action plan

Thrive-Online's extensive action-planning resource helps you to create an action plan that identifies the strategies and activities that will help the child or group you are working with. Thrive-Online enables you to create a shared approach to supporting classes, small groups or individuals to meet their developmental needs.



## 4 Chart progress and measure outcomes

You can chart and measure the progress of individuals, groups, classes or the whole school over time through a review and re-assessment process. This cycle can be repeated many times. The goal is to bring children to an age-appropriate stage of social and emotional development.



## Benefits of Thrive-Online for headteachers and other leaders

Whatever improvements they are making in children's lives, schools are under pressure to provide clear data to evidence their outcomes. Thrive-Online enables you to gather and apply data relating to pupils' social and emotional development in a range of ways to help you meet your needs.

### Here are just some of the ways you can use data from Thrive-Online in your school:

- Identify which classes have pupils who need an extra adult to provide support and monitor progress
- Develop termly whole-class action plans to pitch personal and social education at the right level
- Create action plans and activities to improve the wellbeing of particular groups and individuals
- Link Thrive results to other measures, such as academic achievement, attendance or exclusions
- Evaluate the impact of Pupil Premium and Early Years Funding by profiling and reviewing pupils with Thrive action plans
- Demonstrate the impact of the Thrive Approach across the school or on specific groups, such as those not yet meeting age-related expectations
- Provide evidence for reviews and funding for looked-after children and Early Help Assessments, children with special educational needs (SEN) and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Provide impact data for different audiences, including parents, governors, local authorities, academy trust boards and Ofsted, or to feed into the Whole School Self Evaluation and Whole School Improvement Plan.

# Your journey through Thrive

The most rewarding explorations start with a single step. The first step on your Thrive journey is simple.

Watch our online Awareness session, which you can find on the homepage of the Thrive website, [thriveapproach.com](http://thriveapproach.com). Once you have completed this, there are a number of steps to introduce and embed

Thrive across your organisation. How far you go through the journey and the time that it takes will vary according to the particular needs of your setting.

## Step 1 - Introducing the Thrive Approach

Training for senior leadership teams, showing how the Approach can be introduced across your organisation to enhance the age-appropriate development of all children.

## Step 2 - Training for Practitioners

Training key staff, such as those involved with inclusion and/or pastoral support, so they are able to profile students and develop strategies for one-to-one or group interventions.

## Step 3 - Embedding Thrive

Broadening the impact of Thrive by sharing the principles and language of Thrive with all staff in your setting.

## Step 4 - Evolving Thrive

Developing and extending the skills of Thrive Licensed Practitioners, ensuring they remain effective and up-to-date with their practice.

### Step 1 - Everything You Need to Introduce Thrive to All Children in Your School (Key Stages 1/2 or 3/4/5)

A two-day training that equips senior leadership teams with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to take a strategic approach to embedding Thrive across their setting and to train staff in supporting age-appropriate social and emotional development.

### Step 2 - Licensed Practitioner training (Early Years, Childhood or Adolescence)

An extensive training that equips staff with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to support the social and emotional development of all children, and to work reparatively with children in difficulty to help them to re-engage with life and learning.

### Step 3 - Thrive Induction

An introduction to the Thrive Approach for all staff, enabling a shared understanding of the principles of Thrive. This will help to embed Thrive across the setting, creating a consistent framework.

E-inductions, two-hour, three-hour and full-day training options are available.

### Step 4 - Continuing professional development courses and conferences

A selection of short courses and conferences run throughout the year, on a variety of topics to deepen understanding and practice.

Licensed Practitioners are required to attend one CPD event per year to maintain their licence.

**Thrive-Online™**

Underpinning all Thrive practice.

A screening, individual profiling, action-planning and progress-monitoring tool.



# Adopting a whole-school approach

## How I used Thrive to change our whole school

**Headteacher Craig Prichard of Penywaun Primary School in Wales used Thrive to embed a whole-school approach to making sure each child has their emotional needs met.**



### Why did Thrive appeal to you?

In our school, 50–70% of children have free school meals, and many have suffered substantial emotional trauma. We have looked-after children, as well as children who have experienced domestic abuse, physical abuse and neglect. When I joined the school, it was immediately apparent that we needed to put something in place to address this.

We started running nurture and emotional literacy groups. These groups did impact positively on the children who took part, but I can't honestly say they had a massive impact on the school as a whole. I went to a Thrive event held by the local authority, and I immediately thought, 'This is it! This is what I've been looking for!'

### How did you introduce Thrive to the school?

For me, if Thrive was going to work then it had to be led from the top. So, I did the 10-day training myself. I wanted to get a better understanding of the Approach and I felt that if I was asking staff to do it then I needed to be able to 'walk the talk'.

The course completely changed the way I think about child development, the way I talk to children, the way I approach confrontation... I'd been teaching for more than 20 years and I hadn't had training like this before. It totally changed me. My staff see how passionate I am about it. I roll up my sleeves and get stuck in. I'm now thinking of doing the 'Train the Trainer' course as well so we can train our own staff.

### How has Thrive affected your pupils?

There are so many success stories. One of our boys in Year 6, from a very troubled background, was self-harming in school, head-butting and punching walls, hurting others and running off. His needs weren't being met and his self-esteem was at rock bottom. I did a Thrive assessment and then worked with him once or twice a week on the activities suggested by Thrive-Online. Our first activity was a trust-building exercise that involved eating doughnuts while trying not to lick the sugar off our faces. I would say, 'It's so good to see you laughing; you've got a lovely smile!' and make him feel good about himself. Gradually, after a few months on the Thrive programme, the level of incidents dropped. If he felt he was going to

explode, he would come to me. By the end of the year, he had started feeling special. He was smiling and had stopped running off. But he also exceeded his end-of-year target, reaching Level 4 instead of Level 3. Now, don't tell me that Thrive doesn't impact on learning. The work we did put him in a position where he was ready to learn.

### How have you used Thrive-Online?

Being able to assess and monitor the progress of individual children and whole classes through Thrive-Online has been invaluable. I'm challenged constantly to show the impact of my spending, and now I can easily collate and share the hard data with the local authority and other bodies. I'm currently tracking our children who have had individual Thrive support and comparing their attainment to the rest of the class. So far, we're seeing that the children who have had Thrive are actually overtaking their peers. When I get data like that, it excites me! This is the proof that Thrive is working.

### In what way is Thrive a whole-school approach?

When other teachers and headteachers have visited our school, they've noticed that our staff have a certain manner when they interact with the children. I'm finding that staff who are working closely with my eight Thrive Practitioners are picking up the way that they're talking to children, and they're looking at behaviour differently, so there's been a definite shift in attitudes. My aim long term is to get everybody – all of the school support staff and teaching staff – trained as Licensed Practitioners.

Thrive has changed the way we respond to behaviour as a school too. Whereas before we might have excluded a child, now we might give them time with a Thrive Practitioner. A child needs to see a consequence, but what's the point of sending them away from school? At least if they're working with a Thrive Practitioner, they can develop the skills to regulate themselves better next time.

# Practitioners share the difference Thrive makes for children

## Case study 1: Michael

**Michael had excellent verbal communication skills, but his social skills and understanding of other people's feelings and needs was limited. This restricted his ability to hold friendships for any length of time. He would be attracted to adults or very young children, or isolate himself but be frustrated with his situation.**

When we first met, Michael was very anxious, unsettled, irritable and terrified of moving up to Year 7. To support him, we did a lot of puppet work and drama with role play. Through this experience, Michael learnt to use his skills better. He learnt to assess others and find things in common, and use these key openings to hold a conversation. He also learnt how to share his feelings verbally with someone else.

Gradually, Michael became much more confident. He laughed frequently and could see humour in situations once they were broken down into small scenes using puppets, such as in the playground or on the school bus. He said, 'I know I am the puppet that is talking, but it is weird how the puppet is teaching me how to be myself!' We also played Dilemmas as a way to look at totally random situations that helped Michael to problem-solve, and make judgements and calculated decisions.

Thanks to the Thrive sessions, school support and Michael's own development, his self-esteem soared and his anxiety levels greatly reduced.

## Case study 2: Annie

**When Annie first joined the school in Year 9, she was angry and aggressive, often swearing loudly at staff. She found it difficult to attend lessons and appeared to trust no one. Her family background was difficult. It was clear that she felt abandoned by her family and found the whole experience frightening and overwhelming.**

It was really helpful to do a Thrive assessment with Annie in the second week of her starting school, as it gave me a clear indication of where to focus in terms of addressing her learning needs. What emerged was that Annie was relying on her survival skills to cope, and was unable to identify or regulate her emotions or meet her needs. She couldn't show anyone that she was distressed, relying instead on a tough, aggressive manner that kept everyone at bay. She didn't know how to keep herself safe and had low self-esteem.

On the basis of this assessment, I was able to create an action plan for her. Over a period of time, Annie's behaviour significantly improved and she developed better relationships with both teachers and peers. Her attendance improved and the number of behaviour points she received dropped progressively from seven in January, six in February and just two in the last month. She has not been excluded or sent home for a long time and has started to receive achievement awards for her academic work.

## Case study 3: Sarah

**Before I began Thrive with Sarah, she used to see me coming across the playground and freeze. She wouldn't make eye contact and had a blank facial expression.**

Now, 8 months later, after working on gaze-holding games and trusting games, Sarah smiles, runs up to me, holds my gaze and talks to me, although she still has very little facial expression whilst in my company. During our sessions, Sarah has shared a lot of feelings about her family dynamics. Ongoing work.

"The best thing about Thrive is that it changes children's lives: it tells them that they're loved; it tells them that they're cared for; and it changes their lives for the better."

Teacher, North East

"An in-depth and highly interesting day on how the brain develops from birth to adolescence. Thought provoking into putting theory into practice. I'm now looking forward to taking this on in my school and seeing the impact on students."

Teacher, London



#### Next steps

Find out more about Thrive and how you can help change lives at [thriveapproach.com](https://thriveapproach.com) or email [enquiries@thriveapproach.com](mailto:enquiries@thriveapproach.com) or call the Thrive team direct on **01392 797555**

