

What is ?

The Thrive Approach has been developed over many years helping children to flourish. It supports their emotional and social development and helps them feel happy and secure, able to enjoy friendships, relate well to others and be ready and able to learn. It supports them in becoming more self-assured, capable and adaptable. It can also address any troubling behaviours providing a firm foundation for academic attainment.

What are the guiding principles of the approach?

There are four guiding principles of the Thrive Approach:

-  Every child is a unique person, constantly developing and learning in different ways and at different rates, each with his/her own abilities, talents and potential to be fulfilled.
-  Children's healthy development, emotional well-being and learning are crucially dependent upon, and promoted through, positive relationships.
-  Children flourish when they are confident, self-assured, capable and resilient.
-  Children thrive in enabling environments, in which their individual development, learning experiences and needs are understood, responded to and supported through strong partnerships with parents/carers.

What are VRF's?

Vital Relational Functions are the tools used in Thrive to address a child's emotional state during a crisis.

Attune: This is where you are alert to how they are feeling. You demonstrate that you understand the intensity, pitch, pace, volume, expansiveness or special experience of the child's emotional state.

Validate: This is where you are alert to the child's experience. This needs to happen before you move to help them regulate it. This is the beginning of being able to think about feelings.

Containment: This is where you demonstrate that you understand the pitch, intensity, quality of their feeling or mood and that you can bear it. This is where you show that you can take their deep distress, raging anger or painful sorrow and make it a survivable experience. **Catch it, match it and digest it by thinking about it and offering it back, named, in small digestible pieces.** This builds trust for the child: in you, in adults and in the world.

Soothe, calm, and stimulate: This is where you must be alert to how they are feeling and demonstrate emotional regulation by soothing and calming their distress. **Catch it, match it** and help the child to regulate the feeling up or down. They need to experience being calmed before they can do it for themselves.

Thrive Practitioners are trained to use VRF's and are happy to demonstrate them and encourage any staff member to use them too.



“Goodies for baddies”: doesn’t this approach reward bad behaviour?

When we realise a child has not had the appropriate experiences to learn how to do fractions, we provide additional reparative experiences to address that issue.

Thrive is no different. It recognises that behaviour is communication (even if that behaviour is seen as ‘bad behaviour’) and helps adults to identify the gaps in children’s emotional development.

Thrive provides the necessary information and skills to address those gaps. Emotional and social learning is essential and intrinsic to academic learning.

Some of the activities suggested in the action plans are usually associated with children who are much younger and less able than the one being assessed. This is dependent on the outcome of the assessment. Many pupils require the experiences from their younger childhood to be re-visited to enable the pathways in their brain to become established. This can be observed as a “reward” when it is actually

“therapy” for that particular child.

What are the benefits of Let's help every child thrive ?

- ✚ Thrive teaches the understanding of children’s behaviour as communication, improves learning skills and leads to greater attainment.
- ✚ It promotes productive learning for all children.
- ✚ It creates practical strategies that can be implemented the next day.
- ✚ It supports and empowers, providing the confidence and competence to work with challenging and vulnerable children, and with parents and integrated teams.
- ✚ It leads to better relationships at home and in school.
- ✚ It provides ongoing support through a peer group of fellow trainees, Thrive-Online support tools and continuing professional development.
- ✚ The Approach is targeted, rigorous and measured.

What kinds of behaviour does it help with?

The Thrive Approach helps children who are, temporarily or more permanently, restless, withdrawn or underachieving as well as those with attachment issues or challenging and disruptive behaviour. Schools that have introduced Thrive report improved attendance, reduced classroom disruption, better educational attainment and fewer exclusions. Parents report significant improvements in their relationship with their children as well as improved behaviour. The children themselves say they feel better understood and they get more out of school.

Who needs an assessment and why are we assessing all our children?

Whole class/group screening ensures that the emotional development of all children is monitored, not just those with worrying behaviour. Thrive-Online will pick up those children with over-adaptive behaviour; Licensed Practitioners regularly report that through Whole Class Screening they are made aware of children who they did not realise had emotional issues. Once the emotional levels of the class/group are identified, the children can be grouped for activities accordingly.

At Bentley High Street, we will be screening all our pupils as part of our ongoing

assessments in order to create a baseline for future years.

Pupils may be referred for screening at any time should a staff member feel it would be beneficial for the child or a group of children.

How is it that all children can benefit from thrive?

Thrive is an approach to working with all children. It is based on neurological evidence which addresses brain development so that all children learn to regulate their emotional responses, develop resilience and manage disappointment and frustration.

All children (and adults!) need a little emotional support when things are going wrong. Thrive provides a way of understanding and addressing the emotional and social development of all children. It pays specific attention to children as and when they experience interruptions to that development whenever and for whatever reason they arise.

How can thrive work in a class situation?

The screening tool identifies children who are working just below age-appropriate levels. These children can benefit from the application of the Thrive Approach through whole class teaching and curriculum based strategies. Strategies are also provided for small group work and 1-1 support.

