

## Seven reasons to embrace Thrive



“ Good mental health is intrinsically linked to good attendance, attainment and behaviour, so if we want to improve these, we need to be building on a foundation of emotional wellbeing and resilience. ”

**Anna Smee** – Managing Director of Thrive

## Seven reasons to embrace Thrive

1

Thrive is an effective tool used to identify and address social and emotional development needs and support mental health

2

Thrive is a powerful and proactive approach which helps to prevent mental health problems from developing

3

Thrive results in lower rates of referrals to external agencies and cost savings in terms of interventions and staff time

4

All children and young people from 0-25 can benefit from Thrive - it can be used in any and all schools, settings and other organisations

5

As well as benefitting children and young people, Thrive enhances staff wellbeing and aids job satisfaction and retention

6

Thrive improves attendance, attainment and behaviour and decreases exclusions and behavioural incidents

7

Thrive allows schools and multi-site organisations to benchmark and measure progress and impact using a unique assessment tool called Thrive-Online

**More on each of these follows,  
but first, here's a little about us...**

In a nutshell, we provide both training for educators and access to our award-winning platform, Thrive-Online.

## How – and why – we started

“ I’ve been s’cluded. ”

This was the response a six-year-old boy gave to Thrive co-founder Roe Lovelock in the early 1990s when she got chatting to his mum in a supermarket and asked him why he wasn't in school.

The child, who couldn't even say the word excluded, let alone understand the concept of exclusion, made a big impression on Roe, a social work trainer. To her, it spoke volumes about the flaws in the education system of the day and highlighted what needed to change. Roe and the three other co-founders of Thrive (Jan Banks, a psychotherapist; Julia Bird, a Gestalt psychotherapist and educationalist; and Lynne Tarrab-Snooks an integrative psychotherapist and educationalist) kept hearing about children who had been excluded, often from several schools, and often at a young age. They could see the damage this was doing to a generation of children and young people and the impact exclusions were having on their life chances, including the increased risk of outcomes including criminality, substance abuse and gang membership.

They believed that children's behaviour stems from unmet need and that until this need is met, children are unable to change their response to circumstances. The Thrive Approach was borne out of the passion these experts felt to effect change in the education system and to make schools places of compassion and understanding that seek to meet pupils' need, rather than punish them for behaviour that is not a conscious choice. They combined aspects of theory and expertise in their respective fields to define key developmental needs and provide responses and activities to help strengthen children and young people's engagement in learning and life.

With the growing crisis in children and young people's mental health, Thrive is needed now more than ever and our focus has broadened from the specific issue of exclusions to the wider issue of poor mental health in young people including problems with behaviour, attendance and attainment.

## Where we are now

- More than 75,000 educators in 2,800 schools and settings have received Thrive training, ensuring that 795,500 children and young people aged 0–25 have access to the Thrive Approach.
- Settings using the Thrive Approach report that mental wellbeing, attendance, staff morale and retention, relationships with parents and carers, behaviour and attainment have improved dramatically and often in a short timescale. They report that fixed-term exclusions, absenteeism and long-term mental health problems have decreased.
- Settings also tell us they are saving money on interventions and additional staffing costs to support poor behaviour. They are well-prepared for inspections because they have data to evidence pupils' progress with behaviour and wellbeing. Plus, using Thrive-Online helps to streamline EHCP referrals and can be used as an early indicator of safeguarding concerns.
- Thrive was the global winner of the Digital Health and Wellbeing Learning Product of the Year Award and the Gold Award at the Digital Education Awards. We have also been shortlisted in the Education Resources Awards and the MAT Excellence Awards.
- Our Net Promoter Score, which measures customer loyalty and satisfaction, is +67. The industry benchmark is +42.



## Where we're going

Our mission is to positively impact the lives of millions of children and young people, so they feel safe, supported and ready to learn.



## Facts and figures



Thrive is used in  
**2,800+ schools**

**75,000+ staff**

have received training in  
the **Thrive Approach**



**30+ Schools**  
of Excellence

**795,500+ children  
and young people**

are **benefitting** from access to **Thrive**



**14,000+ Thrive**

**Licensed  
Practitioners** trained

**80 qualified  
trainers**

delivering courses

An independent study looking into the **social return on investment of the Thrive Approach** estimates that between **£7.70 and £9.06** of value for society is generated for every **£1 invested** in its implementation.



When **longer-term outcomes** are taken into account – including reductions in social and emotional problems later in life as a **result of exposure to Thrive** in childhood – the potential **social return** rises to between **£16.50 and £22.00** for every **£1 invested** in Thrive.

Now you know a bit more about us,  
**let's get back to those seven reasons...**

# 1

## Thrive is an effective tool used to identify and address social and emotional development needs and support mental health

An NHS survey revealed 20.3 per cent of 8–16-year-olds had a probable mental disorder in 2023, up from 12.1 per cent in 2017. At the same time, waiting lists for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are growing longer, with waiting times of up to three years in some parts of the country. The Thrive-Online platform allows educators to quickly assess all children (this can be done on a group or individual basis). This questionnaire-based assessment is completed based on what teachers see in front of them and allows them to assess children's social and emotional skills against age-related expectations. It's important to say that Thrive-Online is not a diagnostic tool. For example, it will not suggest that a child is or isn't autistic but it will give activities and strategies for a child who is struggling to contain their emotions, whether they are on the autistic pathway or not.

As well as this benchmark of children's social and emotional skills, Thrive-Online will suggest an action plan of relevant strategies and activities that will help children and young people to progress and improve against these age-related milestones.

### Fortis Academy, in Birmingham

Fortis Academy is a large secondary school with a high proportion of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium. Thrive was introduced in 2020, in response to concerns about pupils' wellbeing, especially given the pandemic. Thrive Licensed Practitioners prioritised giving basic Thrive training to staff so that they could respond to the needs of all pupils when they returned to school after the lockdowns.

Thrive Licensed Practitioner **Vicki Williams** said: "Our pupils are more resilient now as a result of Thrive and this will mean that their grades will increase.

Thrive is teaching them empathy and to take on another person's point of view, which has helped their window of tolerance to grow."



# 2

## Thrive is a powerful and proactive approach which helps to prevent mental health problems from developing

The Thrive Approach equips school staff with an understanding of the theories that underly positive mental health, especially around neuroscience. They can then help children to understand their emotions and how to manage them, and increase their own self-awareness too. Our community often describes this as a lightbulb moment that empowers adults and children to understand mental health in a different way and to recognise that proactive steps such as stress management, healthy lifestyle choices and early intervention can help mitigate the factors that contribute to mental health problems. This also leads to

greater resilience and improved overall wellbeing. Specifically, educators tell us that they are also able to identify children with mental health needs before they reach crisis point. For example, if a child is quiet and compliant, it may not be obvious that they are masking anxiety or other problems. By identifying this need at an early stage through using Thrive-Online, teachers can intervene and help to prevent problems from developing.



### Kaizen Primary School, in London

Kaizen Primary School began its journey with Thrive in 2016 as a way of improving attendance and behaviour. It runs Family Thrive courses to support families and carers in its local community and is a Thrive School of Excellence. Behaviour and attendance have both improved – something the school puts down to Thrive, but there have been many other benefits, including an overall increase in wellbeing.

The school’s Thrive Licensed Practitioner **Alice Bird** said: “Our children don’t seem as angry or worried as they have been in the past. They are definitely more able to say how they feel.”

### Rothesay Nursery School, in Luton

Rothesay Nursery School, in Luton, has been using Thrive since 2018. The setting has a high number of vulnerable children as well as large numbers of children with SEN and children with English as an Additional Language.

Deputy Headteacher and Senco **Elizabeth Leer** said: “Thrive is a constant reminder about how important it is to know about neuroscience and how children’s brains are developing, especially during the early years. We can almost be like brain surgeons because children’s brains are able to forge new connections and adapt. What we do here really is shaping children’s futures.”



## 3

### Thrive results in lower rates of referrals to external agencies and cost savings in terms of interventions and staff time

Early intervention and support for pupils’ mental health needs can prevent the escalation of challenges that may lead to the need for special education services. By addressing mental health concerns proactively, schools can reduce the number of pupils requiring enhanced support

via Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) or being referred to specialist behaviour support teams or CAMHS. It also means that classroom staff and SLT can focus on education, rather than firefighting the disruptive behaviour that often occurs when children and young people’s needs are not being met.

### Palladian Multi Academy Trust, in Somerset

Thrive was introduced to one school in this MAT in 2018 because it had a large number of dysregulated children unable to cope with the day-to-day school and classroom environment. The negative impact this had on the rest of the children and staff was significant and meant that the headteacher often requested interventions from local authority specialists. Thrive was soon taken up by the MAT’s other settings and it is now working hard to become the first Thrive Multi-Academy Trust of Excellence. As a result, behaviour has improved, referrals to outside agencies have fallen and staff morale has improved as a culture of wellbeing has grown and become embedded across the MAT.

Executive Headteacher **Becky Wilson** said: “Thrive is, and will continue to be, the golden thread that runs across all of the schools to support our trust vision ‘to provide excellent and equitable opportunities for everyone to flourish.’”



# 4

All children and young people from 0-25 can benefit from Thrive – it can be used in any and all schools, settings and other organisations

Thrive can support children and young people at any stage up to the age of 25, offering settings a joined up approach to wellbeing. This is particularly helpful for organisations which are operating at scale such as local authorities, children’s centres or Multi Academy Trusts. Children can start benefitting from the Thrive Approach at an early years setting and this work can be built on at primary, secondary and specialist schools, as well as organisations working in communities

or social care. This wrap around, consistent approach allows for maximum effectiveness, especially if settings also offer Family Thrive courses. These sessions allow parents and carers to learn about the Thrive Approach so that a common language and way of being is offered at school, in the community and at home. No other therapeutic or intervention-based response to children and young people’s mental health offers this continuity and consistency.

## Feltham Young Offenders Institution, in Surrey

Feltham Young Offenders Institution adopted the Thrive Approach in 2022 after a senior leader had seen its effectiveness in educational settings. The setting used Thrive with a small group of offenders who all showed measurable improvements to their wellbeing and mental health. The boys themselves reported feeling more confident and better able to manage daily life.

**Martin Downs**, Deputy Head of Education at Feltham Young Offenders Institution, said: “To achieve educational outcomes like attainment and progress to GCSEs or vocational or functional skills, you need to make sure that the softer skills are developed so that young people feel safe. These basic needs have to be met or there can be no progress. Thrive is a great way of ensuring that this solid foundation is in place as well as helping to build relationships with staff. Relationships are the foundation of everything that Thrive does. It also provides very rich data that helps the team to understand what is going on for that learner. Everyone here knows that the behaviour that the boys sometimes display on the outside doesn’t always match what is going on inside. Thrive is a tool that shows us where the behaviour is coming from.”



# 5

## As well as benefitting children and young people, Thrive enhances staff wellbeing and aids job satisfaction and retention

By creating a supportive, nurturing environment for children and young people, staff are also helping to create a mentally healthy workplace for themselves and their colleagues. By recognising and prioritising pupils' mental health, staff are also placing an emphasis on their own mental health. This in turn aids job satisfaction and retention. Thrive training starts from a position of teaching educators about their own processes and triggers. The logic is that once the adults understand this about themselves, they can pass on this knowledge and awareness to their pupils, helping them to develop positive strategies to get their needs met.

In 2024, in recognition of the tremendous strain that educators and school staff are under, we launched a new course which focuses solely on staff wellbeing, helping educators to develop and maintain the resilience they need to thrive in their workplaces. This will also help schools to address staff retention and recruitment problems.

### Holy Trinity and St John's CoE School, in Kent

At Holy Trinity and St John's CoE School, in Kent, staff have reported feeling much more confident and empowered in managing behaviour in the classroom as a result of the Thrive Approach.

Headteacher **Rob Garratt** said: "Staff feel more confident. They know they are supported because we have a structured, whole school approach – it's a positive shift for everyone."



### Northfields School and Sports College, in Stockton-on-Tees

**Samantha Strange** is the Personalised Learning Centre Manager at Northfields School and Sports College, a large secondary school in Stockton-on-Tees.

She said: "Thrive training exceeded my expectations and it has brought me huge benefits professionally and personally. It's been an amazing journey that has completely transformed me. I'm much more self-aware and I now consciously practise self-care. As a result, I know that I'm a better practitioner, a better mother, a better wife and a better friend. I love my job and I work with a lot of lovely, like-minded people who support what we are doing. I would advise anyone thinking about starting Thrive training to go for it, for your own mental health and for professional satisfaction."





# 6

## Thrive improves attendance, attainment and behaviour and decreases exclusions and behavioural incidents

Wellbeing and learning are intrinsically linked. By monitoring children and young people's social and emotional development, and ensuring their needs are met, they are more likely to feel safe, supported and ready to engage with life and learning. Settings that have embedded Thrive tell us every day of the difference the Approach makes to attendance, behaviour and learning outcomes.

### Tuition Extra, in Kent

Tuition Extra, in Kent, saw a rise in students' engagement levels with education from 11 per cent to 95 per cent within four months, with learners achieving a GCSE pass rate of 95 per cent. Head of Service **Ruth Minhall** said: "We're proud to be named as a Thrive Ambassador School and to represent a forward-thinking, intelligent and life-changing approach which understands the correlation between emotional development and inspirational academic outcomes."



### Liskeard Hillfort School, in Cornwall

Liskeard Hillfort School, in Cornwall, has seen fixed-term exclusion rates fall to zero, from a high of 35 days in an academic year.

Headteacher **Dr Tim Cook** said: "In my professional opinion, you can't progress more sophisticated things like phonics, reading and writing if a school is like the Wild West. Thrive's principles and practices have helped us to identify individual needs and to respond accordingly so that our children feel settled and ready to learn. We would have been in the mire without it."



### Perry Wood Primary and Nursery School, in Worcester

Perry Wood Primary and Nursery School, in Worcester, has seen attendance increase from 93.7 per cent to 95 per cent – something it attributes to its use of Thrive.

"The impact of Thrive has been amazing – we can really see the progression," said the school's Thrive Lead **Lisa Kelly**.



# 7

## Thrive allows schools and multi-site organisations to benchmark and measure progress and impact using a unique assessment tool called Thrive-Online

Schools have to provide data on key indicators such as attainment and attendance. By doing so, trends can be monitored and any interventions needed can be rapidly put in place in order to provide an effective and timely response. Children and young people’s mental health is one of the main issues facing our society, especially following the pandemic, and yet schools aren’t required to evaluate or evidence this. We believe that a data-based approach is vital to responding to the current mental health crisis and our assessment tool, Thrive-Online, provides a robust and easy to use method of measuring wellbeing that can be used to track progress at an individual, group, class, school, MAT or local authority level. Thrive-Online takes this data and automatically creates a bespoke action plan that can also be implemented at the relevant scale, i.e. from individual to MAT-wide. Crucially, it also generates suggestions for bespoke activities that adults can do with children and young people to fill in developmental or social gaps in order to raise levels of wellbeing.

Thrive-Online helps staff to quickly find effective wellbeing solutions for all children and young people. Many activities suggested by Thrive-Online are designed to be integrated into the curriculum so that wellbeing can be embedded across all aspects of school life.

We offer a Schools of Excellence and Ambassador Schools programme where schools are assessed on their wellbeing provision so that they have confidence that they are meeting pupils’ needs. This also gives them the opportunity to have feedback on their practice to benchmark quality and to continually improve.

### South Green Junior School, in Essex

South Green Junior School Headteacher **Elizabeth Benjeddi** said that Thrive-Online had helped them to spot children who may have been going under the radar because they were not acting out – even though they still had a mental health need. “As a teacher I think it’s easy to only notice the children whose behaviour is more obvious, for example, through shouting or hitting out, so it is much easier to identify that there is a need. The ‘invisible’ children don’t always come to light until they’re in year five or six and then it’s a bit late to help them. Recognising their need sooner means we can intervene a lot earlier,” she said.



## Palladian Multi Academy Trust, in Somerset

**Becky Wilson**, Executive Headteacher at Palladian Multi Academy Trust, said: "To fully embed Thrive, all of our schools are creating class profiles using Thrive-Online twice a year so that we can collate and analyse the data together as a trust. We can then pick up on common themes and intervene appropriately at an early stage to prevent problems gaining momentum, rather than waiting until there's an issue and managing them reactively. If common themes are identified, i.e. should there be an area where many children are struggling, we can use our resources wisely across the group and put the right interventions in place quickly. Whereas our smaller primary schools may have struggled on their own to access this level of support if at all. The data we get from Thrive-Online allows us to assess pupils against age-related expectations for social-emotional development and create action plans to support them as needed. It allows us to evidence trends to internal and external stakeholders, such as our governors, parents, and Ofsted, and show the impact of what we're doing around mental health and wellbeing."



Stay connected



**thrive**   
Removing barriers to learning

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