



At St Bede's Catholic Middle School, we want all children to flourish, so we have embedded the use of The Thrive Approach in order to support their emotional and social development.

Our aim is to help our children feel happy and secure to be able to enjoy friendships, to relate well to others and be ready and able to learn. We recognise the impact a child's emotional development has on their overall achievement and have developed a whole school approach with specific provision within our curriculum designed to help the children with their emotional and social skills.

Our vision and aims

Our Vision is to:

Develop children emotionally so they are able to recognise and distinguish their emotions and learn ways of responding to their feelings appropriately.

We aim to:

- Provide alternative support for children who are experiencing emotional, social or behavioural difficulties.
- Provide a safe and calm environment for children to develop their skills.
- Enable children to take pride in their achievements and enhance self-esteem.
- Help children to manage their feelings and develop skills to enjoy and participate in school life.
- Use positive approaches to manage all behaviours.

What is Thrive?

Thrive is a therapeutic approach to help support children with their emotional and social development.

The Thrive approach offers practical strategies and techniques and is built around online assessments which identify children's emotional development and provides action plans for their individual needs.

Research has shown that how we behave is linked to how we feel and our emotions are linked to how we learn. By teaching children to recognise and notice these feelings and emotions it can help with their development and learning.

Children sometimes need some extra support with their emotional growth and this can be temporary or over a longer period of time.

Thrive promotes their emotional and social growth by building positive relationships between a child and their peers and helps them explore and understand their feelings through various activities.

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

What are Vital Relational Functions (VRF's)?

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, 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 upon request.

Why might my child attend a Thrive session?

Many children experience difficulties during their time at school. These may include:

- Difficulties with friendships.
- Getting into difficulties during unstructured time.
- Finding it hard to settle in the classroom.
- Finding it difficult to manage their strong feelings.
- Not knowing who to turn to when feelings are too big to manage on their own.

These situations can lead to many different feelings which may seem overwhelming at times. They might include: anger, frustration, sadness, loneliness, confusion or anxiety.

All these feelings are very normal and happen to a lot of children. The Thrive sessions are to help children learn to manage their feelings and teach them strategies that will help promote their learning at school.

What will happen in a Thrive session?

The session may be on an individual basis or as part of a small group of children. During each session there will be an activity which may include:

- Story telling
- Circle games
- Arts and crafts
- Sand play
- Movement and relaxation
- Hand and foot massage
- Cooking and preparing food
- Role play and puppet work
- Games
- Outdoor activities
- Emotional exploration

What are the benefits of 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.

Our whole school commitment to the 'Thrive' approach impacts positively on pupils' emotional and mental well-being, ensuring that they are confident in securing healthy relationships and that they stay safe from abuse and exploitation.

The school places great importance on the welfare of its pupils and employs a pastoral team to help support any difficulties that your child may be having at school or at home. For further information about Thrive or any other support that school offers, please contact school.