



As part of the good pastoral care we provide across our school federation, we are working with an excellent approach called '*Thrive*'. *Thrive* means 'to flourish, to grow vigorously and make steady progress' and that is the aim for all children and families within our community. It is a way of helping children grow in self-confidence and resilience and it is also a very practical tool for showing teachers and parents easy ways to make this happen.

Schools across Devon and beyond are now using *Thrive* and finding that it is giving us a clearer way of understanding why children behave the way they do. The approach is based on the most current knowledge of how the brain develops and how this links to child development and how we form our closest relationships to parents and siblings. It emphasises the importance of creativity and play as research has proved that these are key to helping a child to be emotionally healthy and to learn effectively. If we are anxious, sad, angry and unconfident we hold back, hit out or lose interest. Feeling happy and safe and being able to concentrate, naturally leads us to be curious and to enjoy learning new things.

At school we already have many ways of helping children to learn at their pace and with their particular needs: sometimes children struggle in one area but forge ahead in another. *Thrive* is just another way or 'intervention' that is used to match the individual needs of each child so that they have the best chance of reaching their full potential in life and learning. It looks at the brain development building blocks and identifies any gaps or interruptions. We all have these gaps due to life processes such as bereavement, illness, moving house, changing family etc. It can be a big change or something very small but each child can be helped to build their own stress management system to cope with whatever comes their way in the best way possible. *Thrive* suggests specific activities, strategies, fun ideas, practical ways to bridge the gaps and build to the next level. It uses ideas for teachers and parents and can be for individual children, a group or a whole class.

Thrive is a whole school approach for everyone who works in the schools. There are also *Thrive* practitioners who are teachers and learning support assistants who are trained in *Thrive* to a high standard – it involves at least nine full days initial training with follow up supervision and training to maintain their *Thrive* licence. You may be asked if you would like a *Thrive* assessment of your child and, should that happen, you will be asked for your written permission at that time. We are always happy to give you further information if you would like to know more.

You can also learn more about *Thrive* at www.thriveapproach.co.uk which fully explains the science and practical ideas behind the approach.