

Life Skills Manor: Creating hope, healing and opportunity

Faced with an increasing number of pupils struggling with anxiety, low self-esteem, attachment difficulties and trauma-related behaviours, the team at Life Skills Manor knew they needed to rethink how they supported the social and emotional development of their pupils.

Today, the school is not only rated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted but is also a Thrive School of Excellence, helping young people to re-engage with learning and flourish in every aspect of their lives.

Why Thrive?

"As an independent school with high expectations, we needed a framework that would promote emotional literacy and inclusion while aligning with our values," explained Kim Ochs, Life Skills Manor's Pastoral Manager and Thrive Licensed Practitioner. "Thrive stood out for its grounding in neuroscience and child development theory. It helps staff understand how the brain develops, how adverse experiences affect learning and behaviour, and what support children need at different developmental stages."

Implementing the Thrive Approach

Senior leaders and practitioners worked together to establish a whole-school approach that placed emotional wellbeing at the centre of daily practice. A clear roadmap was created to embed Thrive over three years, allowing time for consistent language and behaviours to be adopted and for staff to experience the culture shift that comes with embedding the Thrive Approach.

The biggest challenge encountered during the rollout was space: "We negotiated a budget with SLT and converted both a garage and a garden to create spaces that met the needs of our pupils," Kim explained. These areas now provide safe, calm environments where targeted Thrive work can take place.

The impact of Thrive

"Thrive helps pupils to understand and regulate their emotions, leading to greater emotional resilience, confidence and self-esteem," said Kim. "This foundation enables healthier relationships and a stronger sense of belonging in our school."

Thrive-Online has been central to this success. By providing targeted, personalised action plans, it has helped pupils build stronger, more trusting relationships with both adults and their peers.

The team also used Thrive data in their most recent Ofsted inspection where the school went from a 'Good' to 'Outstanding' rating.

Becoming a Thrive School of Excellence

To recognise the extraordinary impact Life Skills Manor is having on its pupils and the wider community, the school has been named as a Thrive School of Excellence. The award is the highest level of achievement in Thrive's Ambassador School scheme, which shines a light on settings showcasing outstanding mental health and wellbeing support.

"We feel a deep sense of pride, responsibility and excitement about being a beacon for emotional education – helping pupils not just survive school but thrive in every part of their lives," said Kim. "Thrive schools are creating hope, healing and opportunity – you're not just teaching; you're transforming lives," she added.