

Research Protocol:

An exploration of teachers' perspectives of the effectiveness of the Thrive approach for pupils at Elm Tree Community Primary School

Background

This project is an investigation on the impact the Thrive approach has within Elm Tree Community Primary School. The project will focus on teacher perspectives to explore the benefits and all limitations and the potential long-term impact it has on pupils within the school.

Existing research papers surrounding the topic will be critiqued. This project will use empirical data such as interviews to collate different perspectives within Elm Tree Community Primary School. To ensure the appropriate ethical guidelines are maintained the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2020) guidelines will be adhered to and ethical standards will be approved by the Headteacher at Elm Tree Community Primary School.

Research Question

‘An exploration of teachers’ perspectives of the effectiveness of the Thrive approach for pupils at Elm Tree Community Primary School’.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of this project are to investigate how the Thrive approach is perceived by staff to be beneficial to the children within Elm Tree Primary School and to explore the limitations of the intervention. Long-term impacts are also an area to be explored to initiate improvement and further development. The aims of the research project are:

- To identify what works well;
- To identify barriers
- To recommend ways of improving Thrive as an intervention

Introduction

A full and detailed literature search will be undertaken to identify research studies that focus on the Thrive approach within schools. Thrive aims to develop social and emotional wellbeing in children to engage in life and learning skills. Thrive is a developmental model and framework that is used to understand and identify social and emotional wellbeing needs. Thrive has developed over the last 25 years, drawing upon a wealth of experience within social work, psychotherapy and education to help others support children and young people in need of social and emotional development (Thrive, 2021). Thrive is a whole school-based intervention rooted by Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory.

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (2017) evaluated the impact Thrive has on individuals when used as a whole school intervention. In their report they explained how the intervention had raised staff awareness about children's behaviour and made them feel more equipped to manage the behaviour. It was also suggested that staff felt they had a better ability to support vulnerable children with social and emotional wellbeing. It was highlighted that children became more aware of their support contacts within the school environment. London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (2017) also reported on the impact, challenges faced and the next steps when embedding thrive into the whole school approach. Field et al (2019), Bonitto (2019) and London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (2017), have all commented that there is very little research or evidence base evaluating Thrive. It was suggested that attachment theory is well supported by evidence; however, it has been found that how Thrive applies and interprets its theory is much less supported by research findings. There is currently very limited research evidence on how thrive impacts on children's development. No evidence has been suggested that Thrive intervention activities are effective in implanting any of these theories to practice. Limited research has been found in all three of the reviewed articles. This lack of research provides the motivation and rationale for this study.

Identification of participants and recruitment for interview

This project uses qualitative research methods. 20 participants will be recruited to be interviewed. Each interview will take approximately 30 minutes. The researcher will send an invitation email to teachers. A participant information sheet will be attached (see appendix 1). Volunteers who wish to take part in the research will be asked to respond to the researcher via email. The researcher will arrange a time for a Teams/Zoom meeting that is convenient to the volunteer. At this point the researcher will email a copy of the consent form to the participant

(see appendix 2). At the start of the interview the researcher will refer to the consent form that has been emailed and will seek verbal consent that the interviewee has read the information sheet and consent form prior and are happy to proceed.

Analysis

A thematic analysis will be used to interpret the qualitative data (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The thematic analysis will be presented as thematic networks. Thematic networks are web-like illustrations that summarise the main themes constituting a piece of text. The thematic network technique is a robust and highly sensitive tool for the systemisation of presentation of qualitative analyses.

Ethics and Governance

Throughout this project I will ensure that I meet all the considerations and requirements that are suggested by British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2018) guidelines. These ethical issues will be addressed and presented within the participant information sheet and consent forms provided to all participants.

Resources

Resources needed for this project will be IT equipment, printer and an audio recorder

Costings

Research Assistant - hourly rate = £20.00

Timeline of work:

- 10 hours protocol development and support documentation (preparation of information sheets and consent forms)
- 10 hours (20 interviews at 30 mins each)
- 40 hours of transcription
- 10 hours of audio recording
- 10 hours of qualitative analysis
- 20 hours write up of final report

Total number of hours: 100

Total cost £2000.00

References

- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment. Attachment and loss*. London, England: Random House.
- Field, J., Cooke, T DR., Gibby-Leversuch, R DR. (2019). To What Extent Is the Thrive Intervention Grounded in Research and Theory? *Educational Psychology Research and Practice*. 5 (2), p1-8.
- British Educational Research Association [BERA] (2018), *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, fourth edition, London.
- Bonitto, C., 2019. *'EPs views on Thrive': EPs views regarding the perceived utility of the Thrive approach: A chi square and thematic analysis* (Doctoral dissertation, Cardiff University).
- Thrive, A., 2021. *About Thrive and our approach to wellbeing - The Thrive Approach*. [online] The Thrive Approach. Available at: <https://www.thriveapproach.com/about-thrive/> [Accessed 6 May 2021].
- London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, (2017). *Thrive Evaluation and Impact Report*. 1st ed. [ebook] London: London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, pp.1-7. Available at: <https://modgov.lbbd.gov.uk/Internet/documents/s121018/Item%207b.%20Thrive%20Evaluation%20and%20Impact%20Report.pdf> [Accessed 6 May 2021].

Appendices

Appendix 1:

Participant Information Sheet

Invitation

You are invited to take part in a study (individual interviews) to explore staff perceptions of the Thrive intervention within in your school. Please take the time to read this information carefully and talk to others about the study if you wish before deciding whether or not to take part.

What is the purpose of this study?

The aim of this study is to investigate how thrive is beneficial to the children within your school and to explore the limitations of the intervention. Long-term perceptions are also being explored to initiate improvement and further development. The research will look at the barriers, what works well, examples of how thrive has worked and how it can be improved. The research will focus on the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the thrive approach.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part as you are a teaching staff member at Elm Tree and would provide your personal perspective on Thrive through your experiences in the classroom.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is up to you to decide if you wish to take part. If you agree to take part in the study you are free to withdraw from the study seven days after the completion of your interview (if you take part in the interview phase of the study) and this can be done without having to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

Interviews will be arranged via email for a date and time. These will be face to face or via zoom due to Covid-19 restrictions. The interviews will last between 20-30 minutes. If you are unable to attend a telephone interview will be held if the dates are not convenient for you. Should you consent to taking part the researcher will audio record the interview. The interview will be recorded, transcribed, anonymised and analysed.

What are the possible disadvantages and risk in taking part?

A small but possible risk is that we may ask questions and discuss your experiences that you find uncomfortable. If this happens you can stop the interview. If you need further support we will offer you the opportunity to contact your line manager or the independent contact named at the end of this sheet.

What are the possible benefits?

Some people may find it helpful to talk about some of their experiences. The main benefits will be to enable the research team to explore Thrive within your school. The findings may lead to recommendations on how to improve the quality and outcomes within your school. It is hoped that this exploration will enable an idea of how effective and beneficial thrive is for the children within your school.

Will my taking part be kept confidential?

Yes. By removing any identifiable personal information about you, colleagues, individuals, populations, and where necessary, work sites, only statistics and quotations that are not attributable to any individual will be used in any final reports. Any audio recordings will be kept secure and then destroyed once transcribed and any written information will be kept strictly confidential. Only if the researcher uncovers information that suggests that you, or others, are at risk of coming to any harm, will they disclose relevant information following Elm Tree Community Primary School reporting processes.

Elm Tree School is committed to ensuring compliance with current data protection legislation and confirms that all data collected is used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any other person unlawfully. Lancashire County Council is a data controller and in some instances may be a data processor of this data. The procedures for handling, processing, storage and destruction of data are compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018.

What are you going to do with the results of the study?

The results of this study will be reported to the senior management team at Elm Tree Community Primary School. Findings may also be reported in academic journals or presented at training. You will not be identified in any publications.

Who is organising and funding the evaluation?

This research project is organised and funded by Elm Tree Community Primary School

Who has reviewed the study?

This evaluation has been approved by an internal peer review process. An expert has ensured that the project aligns with the most relevant ethical guidance procedures and framework.

Contact Details

If you would like to ask any other questions regarding the research study, please contact:

Elizabeth Brown – browne@elmtree.lancs.sch.uk or

Martyn Taylor – deputy@elmtree.lancs.scho.u

Thank you for taking the time to read this information.

Appendix 2:

Informed Consent

Title of Study

An investigation on the impact the Thrive approach has within Elm Tree Community Primary School.

Principal Investigator

Elizabeth Brown

browne@elmtree.lancs.sch.uk

Purpose of Study

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of this study is to investigate teacher perspectives on the Thrive approach. The aim of the project is to explore how Thrive is beneficial, its limitations and the potential long-term perceptions it has within Elm Tree Community Primary School.

Risks

There are no known risks to you in participating in this study. You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

Benefits

This study will benefit the research by contributing to an academic research paper.

Confidentiality

Your responses to the interview questions will be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a safe place when in the personal possession of the researcher.
- Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

Contact Information

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss contact with Mr Lamb.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Consent

I have read and understood the information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____