

# THRIVE

**Working together** so children and young people can thrive.

📍 RATHCOOLE 📍 MONKSTOWN

April 2021



# THRIVE

**THRiVE is a “collaboration of local parents, schools, community and voluntary organisations and statutory agencies working together to help children and young people in Rathcoole and Monkstown do well”.**

For too long schools and other organisations have worked very hard, but often in relative isolation, to impact disadvantaged communities. The need for a more inclusive approach is signposted in a wide variety of education, social care and health policies and is understood as key to achieving good outcomes.

THRiVE has brokered a vibrant partnership that sees families, schools, other public bodies, the voluntary & community sector and private sector partners **‘ganging up’** on the **causes of under-achievement and poor well-being** rather **than only working to mitigate its symptoms**. Fundamental to its success is the role of partners, especially pupils and parents, as **equal co-architects** in building the foundations so **their community** can thrive.

(**Frazer Baille**, Chair of THRiVE Project Board)



# THRIVE SNAPSHOT



## Attainment

280

Key Stage 2  
pupils supported  
through the BOOST  
programme



20

Key Stage 4  
pupils supported  
through the Aspire  
Programme



450

parents have  
participated in  
family learning  
sessions and events,  
engaged in play and  
learning activities  
with their children.



3000+

targeted literacy,  
numeracy and  
STEM sessions for  
pupils identified as  
under-achieving



**'His recall of multiplication facts is a lot quicker. He is answering more homework questions than ever before.'**  
(Teacher feedback)

**'She was able to explain to the whole class what division is and how to complete equations; her confidence has grown so much.'**  
(Teacher feedback)



**Rathcoole is amongst the 10% most disadvantaged communities in NI.**



**RATHCOOLE  
MONKSTOWN**

## BACKGROUND

**THRiVE is a multi-agency group working together to drive forward a collective vision for children, young people and families in the Newtownabbey area.**

The group includes local parents, Nursery, Primary and Post-Primary schools, community and voluntary organisations, statutory organisations (including Abbey Sure Start, Barnardo's & Monkstown Boxing Club) – Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough Council, Controlled Schools' Support Council, and Department for Education, Education Authority, Stranmillis University College, the Public Health Agency and the Northern HSCT. Partners work through a Project Board and sub-groups, and are committed to a collective vision to improve outcomes for children, young people and families in the area. The project demonstrates a model of good practice for collaborative working and funding which has potential to be transferable to other localities.

Located on the northern fringe of Belfast, Rathcoole and Monkstown are two urban estate areas based in the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area. As a Neighbourhood Renewal Area Rathcoole is amongst the 10% most disadvantaged communities in NI.

Almost one quarter of the population is aged 0-15 and despite both areas facing significant challenges, key stakeholders are working hard to create sustainable change for children, young people and families.

# THRIVE SNAPSHOT

## Parent Engagement

95



parents have received family support, making significant progress on improving their parenting skills.

50



parents have attended parenting programmes

## 40 LOCAL PARENTS HAVE BEEN PART OF PARENT CHAMPION GROUP

- ✓ Hosting Parent Groups in 6 primary schools
- ✓ Delivering parent information sessions
- ✓ Promoting WE CAN campaign locally
- ✓ Meeting with local school principals to plan parent involvement and create adult education opportunities



# GANGING UP ON THE PROBLEM

**Over time, the THRiVE partners have consolidated the aims, outcomes and objectives important to various stakeholders into four key strategic priorities to drive change in the local community.**

1



**Aspiration**

2



**Attainment**

3



**Early Intervention  
& Well-being**

4



**Collaboration**

## Strategic Priorities



1

### ASPIRATION

Schools are accessible, valued and safe places for children, young people, and parents

Parents have greater understanding of the value of education to their child and are more engaged in their child's education

Children and young people have higher levels of belief regarding what they can achieve and how they can achieve their potential



2

### ATTAINMENT

Children and young people are supported to reach their learning potential at all stages of their education

Parents recognise the contribution of learning to health, well-being and personal attainment and feel they have increased access to learning opportunities

Improved attendance levels and engagement of children, young people and parents within education



3

### EARLY INTERVENTION & WELL-BEING

Ensuring that all children in preschool / nursery are fully prepared for school life

Improved access to services for vulnerable children and young people to enable intervention at an early age or stage

Improving resilience and emotional wellbeing of parents, children, young people and teachers



4

### COLLABORATION

Enhanced levels of buy in and focus from all key stakeholders to create a culture of sharing resources and expertise

Increased level of engagement between communities, schools and other stakeholders

Increased and enhanced communication between schools to improve transition process and experience for children and young people

# COLLECTIVE IMPACT APPROACH

**Just as important as the 'what' we are doing to drive change in children's outcomes is the 'how' we are doing it.**

There is growing acceptance that large-scale social change is best achieved through the co-ordination of multiple efforts rather than the often fragmented inputs of individual organisations. Whilst 'one-off' programmes and initiatives successfully reach some children, they can suffer from a lack of connectedness and often fade away when funding dries up. In contrast **Collective Impact** offers a structure and purpose for diverse organisations to work together through clearly defined goals.

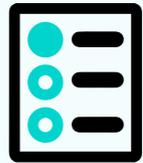
THRiVE has been pioneering a collaborative, community based approach using **collective impact strategies** to help improve outcomes in the area. Although individual projects may differ in terms of their specific objectives or stage of development, they share a focus on partnership working to bring about long-lasting change. This way of working has become known as 'collective impact'. Distinct from other partnerships, Collective Impact collaborations are committed to the 5 key conditions outlined below.



## Collective Impact Approach: How does this work in practice?

1

### COMMON AGENDA



THRiVE has a shared vision for change and an agreed set of actions signed off by the Project Board. This ensures that the focus stays on the key issues for example raising aspiration and achievement. A mechanism to deliver this is the successful 'WE CAN ... Campaign' which enables success stories to be shared locally.

2

### SHARED MEASUREMENT



THRiVE is committed to collecting and using data to make informed decisions and has an Impact Sub-Group who co-ordinate data collection. For example, local schools have an agreed Common Assessment Calendar and are committed to using the same suite of assessment tools.

3

### MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES



THRiVE focuses on 'co-ordinating' various strands of work and 'connecting' the people involved across all sectors. This is achieved through a number of sub-groups with a commitment to shared planning around the four key outcome areas and accountability through the Project Board.

4

### CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION



Regular Board Meetings and ongoing local engagement in a number of sub-groups help ensure a clear picture of local activity is maintained. This enables conversations and planning to reduce duplication, make linkages and connections and ensures resources and efforts are focused on where they are most needed.

5

### BACKBONE SUPPORT



Backbone support is key to co-ordination and helps facilitate the views and engagement of local stakeholders and other partners. THRiVE's backbone support is provided by an experienced Children's Services Manager in Barnardo's. This role takes on the administrative, financial and organisational responsibility for THRiVE and works to strengthen working relationships between partners and sectors. Along with the Project Board they help shape strategic direction, harness the expertise of a wide range of partners and support the active participation of local children and families.

**THRIVE HAS BEEN PIONEERING  
A COLLABORATIVE,  
COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH  
USING COLLECTIVE IMPACT  
STRATEGIES TO HELP IMPROVE  
OUTCOMES IN THE AREA.**



# COLLABORATIVE INVESTMENT

**THRiVE has been working hard since 2015 to grow financial support for the project and the available budget has varied greatly over the years.** Despite fluctuations in budget those involved have remained focused on working together and delivering the key outcomes.



The current collaborative investment 'pot' is hosted by the Education Authority and managed by Barnardo's through the work of the THRiVE Co-ordinator. THRiVE is grateful for the continued support from a number of funders and a Finance Sub-Group. Those that contribute funding to the shared collective vision and activity of THRiVE are considered 'Collaborative Investment' partners.

Managing the expectations and reporting from diverse funders when working towards a shared community vision with multiple stakeholders can be challenging and is a good example of one of the ways THRiVE is innovating to deliver mutually reinforcing activities around a common agenda. This model is a real example of effective local community planning and cross-government co-operation around children's services.

# THRIVE FEEDBACK

**“We have known for some time that effectively addressing educational inequality requires a long-term collective approach involving schools, parents and carers, community and voluntary organisations and with cross-departmental support, and this is at the very heart of what THRiVE is seeking to achieve.”**

**Noel Purdy**  
CREU Director,  
Stranmillis University College

**“Evidence shows that those who achieve a higher level of educational attainment are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours and less likely to adopt unhealthy lifestyle behaviours, particularly in relation to physical activity, diet, smoking and sexual behaviour. The wide range of health and social care involvement in THRiVE highlights how we believe the programme is evidence based and will improve the health and wellbeing of the families involved, as well as the wider community, and will reduce demand for future services.”**

**Hilary Johnston**  
Health & Social WellBeing  
Improvement Manager PHA

**Hugh Nelson**  
Head of Community Well-Being,  
NHSCT



# THRIVE FEEDBACK

**“The Department of Education has been closely involved with THRiVE since it’s inception. We have been delighted to see the programme develop thanks to Barnardo’s driving forward the programme with the support of all the stakeholders who could see the benefits of working more collaboratively together. Barnardo’s relentless support has meant that schools, families and communities now work much more effectively together to the benefit of everyone but especially the children and young people.”**

**Dale Heaney**  
Head of Tackling Educational Disadvantage Team, DE

**“Being a member of THRiVE has made a huge impact to not just Monkstown Boxing Club, but to the hundreds of young people we serve in the Monkstown and Rathcoole communities. Having opportunities to link with key stakeholders from the Statutory, Voluntary and Community sector has enabled the club to make a real difference at point of delivery. Our work is strengthened through the sharing of resources and expertise from partners who share the same mission of improving outcomes for children and young people. With a #WeCan philosophy, partners are driven by ensuring all of us play a role in making sure young people have the very best start in life, irrespective of post code by widening opportunities through a collective approach and a shared vision.”**

**Paul Johnston**  
Manager, Monkstown Boxing Club



# THRIVE FEEDBACK



**“I just wanted to say a huge thank you for all the help during lockdown. Nobody expected what happened and I think we all struggled a bit helping our children with home schooling. We both really looked forward to your weekly phone calls where you always had fun and exciting lessons for L and where you also helped me with questions regarding home schooling. We feel really lucky to have had this experience with the BOOST programme in summer and the highly valued one 2 one during lockdown. We also really loved the weekly newsletters with lots of fun activities and ideas for play. It helped L reading a lot as he enjoyed the comprehensions and reading out loud for you.”**

**Parent**



# ASPIRE SUCCESS STORY

**The ASPIRE PROGRAMME is an innovative partnership between Monkstown Boxing Club and Abbey Community College.** Pupils who need extra support and have been identified as at risk of leaving school early or leaving without any GCSE's are encouraged to join the programme. Each pupil is assigned a Key Youth Worker. This model enables smaller group sizes and allows for the relationship between Key Worker and pupils to be nurtured, promoting positive behaviour and good social skills. One of the guiding principles of the Aspire programme is relational learning, and the belief that significant learning can't happen without a significant relationship.

O joined the 'Aspire' programme at the beginning of Year 12. He did not engage with mainstream education and had been a school refuser since Year 10. He was

diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome and had multiple suspensions during his time in Junior school. For O, learning wasn't fun and a different approach was needed.

Through the support and his active engagement in the Aspire Programme, O achieved 9 GCSE grades A-C, including Maths and English and left school with a positive perspective on education. The experience also changed home life for him and his family. O's Mum commented, **"I cannot begin to tell you how grateful I am for this programme. It was my last port of call, if this didn't help my son, I was out of options. My son is now a different person and I will never be able to repay the Boxing Club and Abbey Community College for what they have done. This programme and the staff are beyond exceptional"**.

**"It instilled a lot of confidence in me that I did not have at the start. My eyes were opened to the reality of leaving school with no qualifications and its affect on my dream of being a carpenter. My Key Worker helped me deal with conflict and prepare how to handle those situations better. If it wasn't for the guidance and support I got from this programme, I don't think I would have been as successful in achieving my GCSE's and getting on my college course. Words cannot explain how grateful I am to have had the opportunity to participate in the Aspire programme."**

**O,**  
1<sup>st</sup> Year Apprentice Carpenter

THRIVE IS A LONG-TERM PROJECT TO TRULY TRANSFORM OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LOCAL AREA.



## CONCLUSION

**THRiVE** is a long-term project to truly transform outcomes for children and young people in the local area. The shared vision is to help every young person reach their potential through a multi-strand and multi-agency commitment to working effectively together. Key activities within this include a focus on relationships, evidence based practice, universal and targeted support to raise achievement, early intervention and collaborative investment.

### Further information:

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Barnardo's NI Children's Services Manager  
and THRiVE Co-ordinator

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### FOLLOW THE WORK OF THRiVE

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**Believe in children**



WE WANT OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO

**THRIVE**

**RATHCOOLE & MONKSTOWN**