

Vermont News 23 January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been a fantastic week across the school, with children engaging really well in all lessons and demonstrating clear progress and achievement. Our Enrichment Programme continues to prove hugely popular, giving children valuable time to enjoy a wide range of exciting experiences. Activities such as swimming, visits to activity centres and sessions at Pinkmead have been particularly enjoyed and are helping to enrich learning even further - helping children to develop their confidence, independence and resilience.

It is with great sadness that I write to inform you of my upcoming departure as Interim Headteacher at Vermont. I have loved working alongside you and your children. Please do come and speak to me over the coming weeks if you have any questions.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. If you have any thoughts, concerns, or ideas, please don't hesitate to share them with us at tellus@vermontschool.co.uk.

With best wishes,

Louisa & The Vermont Team



Vermont School
Vermont Close
Southampton
SO16 7LT

23 January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to let you know that I will be leaving my role as Interim Headteacher at Vermont School at the end of this half term. I have accepted the permanent position of Principal for a new SEMH school opening soon in Hampshire.

This has not been an easy decision. Vermont School is a special place, and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with your children and with our staff since joining the school in April 2024. I have learned so much from our pupils and from this community, and I am very proud of everything we have achieved together.

I want to thank you for the incredible support and partnership you have shown. Working together to give your children the best possible experiences has been an honour. Most importantly, I would like to celebrate our brilliant children. We talk about love a lot at Vermont School because we truly do love our children. They are at the heart of everything we do, and it has been a privilege to see the progress they have made.

I am very mindful that changes such as this can feel unsettling for some of our pupils, particularly those with attachment needs who value consistency and trusted relationships. Parents and carers are very welcome to talk with their child about this change in a way that feels right for them, and to offer reassurance alongside the conversations taking place in school. I have attached a letter if you would like to share this with your child.

I want to reassure you that the school remains in a strong position. Over recent months, the leadership team has been strengthened and the Local Authority has been working closely with the Governing Body to secure long-term stability for the school. They have been planning a leadership handover to ensure that our progress continues without disruption.

The wellbeing, safety and ongoing success of your children remain our highest priority. You will receive further information from the Governing Body in due course regarding next steps for the leadership of the school.

Thank you for your continued support, trust and partnership. It has been a privilege to work with your children, who I will miss very much, and I remain deeply proud of Vermont School.

With best wishes,

Louisa

Louisa Paston
Interim Headteacher





Vermont School
Vermont Close
Southampton
SO16 7LT

23 January 2026

Dear

I am writing to tell you something important.

At the end of this half term, I will be leaving Vermont School because I have been asked to help open a brand-new SEMH school in Hampshire. I will be the Principal there.

I want you to know this:

I have really loved being here with you since April 2024. You have taught me so much—about kindness, bravery, having a go, and looking after each other. You have made me smile every single day.

Even though I will be going to a new school, you will still be safe and looked after here. The teachers, leaders and grown-ups around you are amazing, and they will keep helping you to learn, grow and shine.

Over the next few weeks, I will still be here to work with you, talk with you and make sure everything is ready.

You are all fantastic children, and Vermont School will always be a very special place to me. I will miss you all very much. Remember, you are amazing.

With love,

Miss Louisa



Reminders

Some key reminders:

- Children should refrain from bringing personal toys into school. This is because we do not want them getting lost or broken as this causes a lot of upset.
- Children should please bring plastic water bottles only, as metal water bottles are not permitted in school.
- With the wet weather forecast to continue, please could children come into school with a spare change of clothes and a pair of wellington boots, where possible.
- A transition letter from Polygon has been sent home this week



19/01/26

Good afternoon,

We would like to share an exciting opportunity for parents and carers of Year 5 children. On **11 March**, Polygon School is welcoming prospective families for an informal visit and chat.

This is a valuable chance for you and your child to explore the school environment, meet staff, and ask any questions you may have.

To book a visit, please contact the school by phone on **02380 636776** or by email at **info@polygon.southampton.sch.uk**.

Further information about the school can also be found on their website:
<https://www.polygon.southampton.sch.uk/>

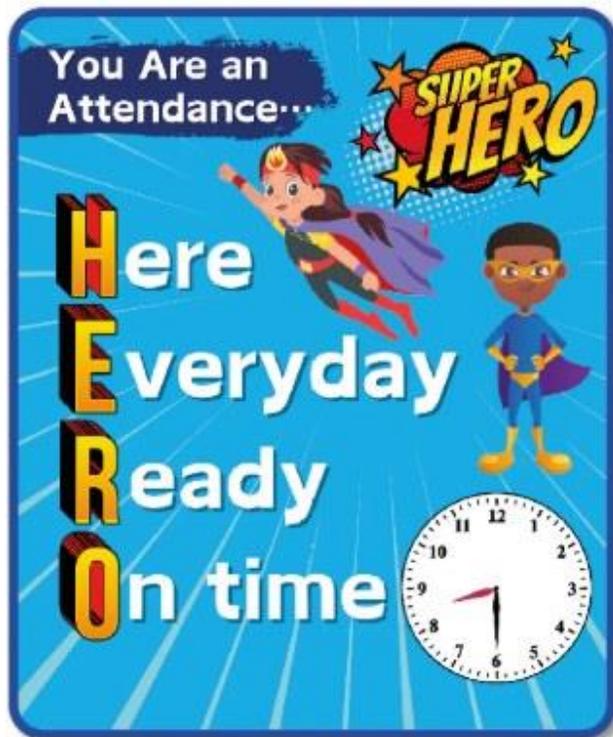
In **July**, you will be invited to share your secondary school placement preference as part of your child's Phase Transfer review. Before this, we encourage you to visit a range of schools to consider which setting can best meet your child's needs. Your local mainstream school will be consulted automatically; however, you are welcome to express a preference for **any** school you feel may be more suitable, including specialist provisions.

Please note that preferences should be for schools **within Southampton City Council's district**, as your child's EHCP is maintained by Southampton. If you are planning to move out of the area, you will need to contact the Southampton SEN Team to discuss next steps.

Once preferences are submitted, the schools you have listed will review them and consider whether they have the provision and resources required to meet your child's individual needs. You will then be contacted in **February/March** via letter or email with confirmation of your child's allocated school place.

Kind Regards
Vermont Team

Attendance



Each week we celebrate attendance. Our target is 90%

Our whole school attendance this week was 89%

Our class smashing attendance targets this week are: Tigers 100%

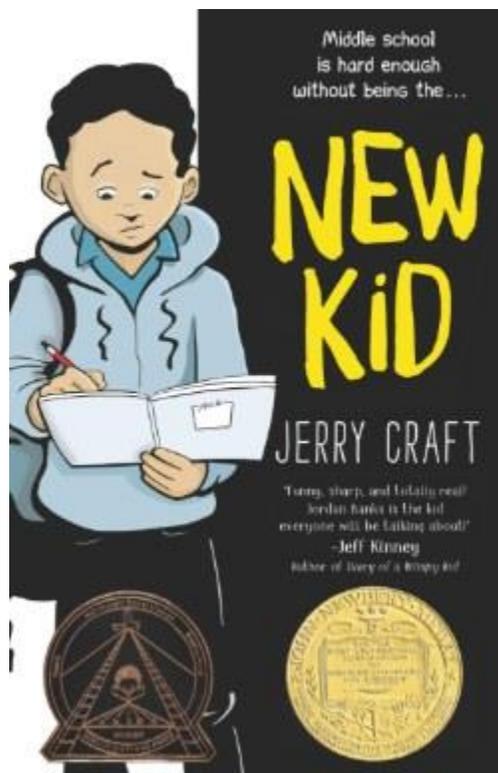
Attendance HERO (Here Everyday Ready On Time)

Tigers are our HERO class this week! Tigers will enjoy cakes today to celebrate their attendance. Well done!

You will receive an email every **Friday** with your child's **attendance percentage**. This is to help keep you informed and up to date on your child's attendance throughout the school year.

This year, we are placing a strong focus on attendance, as we know how important it is for every child's learning, progress, and wellbeing. Please know that our Attendance Lead, **Sian**, is here to offer support and guidance if you have any questions or concerns about your child's attendance.

Our Learning



In English we are reading The New Kid by Jerry Craft.

It is a friendly, relatable graphic novel about a boy named Jordan who starts at a new school and learns how to fit in while staying true to himself. Through colourful illustrations and humour, it explores themes like friendship, confidence, and understanding differences.

Geography

This term in Geography, children will be learning all about *Southampton as a city by the sea*. They will explore the city's rivers and coastline, discover how the port works, and learn why ships, trade and travel are so important to Southampton. Through maps, photographs and hands-on activities, pupils will build a strong understanding of their local area and how it connects to the wider world, developing curiosity, confidence and pride in the city they live in.

National Storytelling Week



From 2nd–6th February, Vermont School will be taking part in National Storytelling Week. During the week, children will enjoy fun storytelling activities that help them listen to, share, and enjoy stories in different ways. This year's theme, *Soundtrack Your Story*, will help pupils explore how music and sounds can bring stories to life. Activities will take place in the afternoons so that daily routines stay the same. We will also be sharing photos to show how the children celebrated storytelling at school.

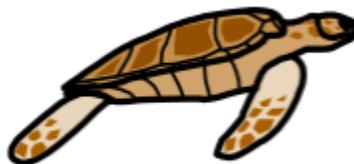
Headteacher Award



Freddie K - Rhinos

For showing patience and resilience to improve your handwriting, Well done, we are so proud of you

Turtles



It has been a busy start to the spring term for Turtles, with so much amazing learning going on!

We have really enjoyed our cooking sessions where we have been learning how to make different types of bread. We have made plain white bread rolls and also flat breads spiced with cumin. The flat breads have been the favourite so far! We can't wait to see what bread type we will be making next.

Our alternative provision this half term is visiting Pinkmead Equestrian Farm to look after the horses and ponies there. We have been learning how to safely groom and care for the horses, explored the different equipment needed to ride them and even had a go at sitting on saddles. We have also shown great team work skills to create different jump and agility courses for the horses to use. Miss Nancy has been really impressed with our behaviour and safe choices whilst on the mini bus and at Pinkmead!

In English, our focus text is "I am Enough" and we have been thinking about positive ways in which we can describe ourselves. We have learned how to use the conjunction 'and' to extend our descriptive sentences into expanded noun phrases. Miss Nancy is super proud of our writing!

In Maths we have been using practical objects to understand how to double numbers and become more fluent with our number bonds to 10 and 20.

We have been thinking about the concept of 'Welcoming' during our RE sessions and have had some really thoughtful discussions about how people may feel if we are unkind to others or make people feel left out. We noticed the link between our school grown-ups waving to us to welcome us into school in the mornings to the people of Jerusalem waving palm leaves at Jesus to welcome him to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

During our Thrive sessions, we have been playing team work games to build our relationships with our peers and also thinking about who we know that looks after us. We thought about how we have people at home and school who care about us and keep us safe, and made 'thank you' cards for them.





















Zola - School Dog update

  
Zola won't be in school for
   
a little while because her body
  +  
needs to rest and have some
   +
quiet time. She is healthy and
 +    
safe and she will be back when
 
she is ready.

Health and Wellbeing

We have introduced a new snack menu in-line with our mission to be a Healthy High 5 School. These are the snacks we will provide to all children every day.

snack Menu	
WEEK ONE	WEEK TWO
Monday: AM – banana and crackers	Monday: AM – grapes and breadsticks
Tuesday: AM – apple and breadsticks PM – carrot sticks and crumpet	Tuesday: AM – bell pepper and crackers PM – strawberries, orange and yoghurt
Wednesday: AM – pear and crackers PM – bell pepper and chees sliders	Wednesday: AM – raisins and breadsticks PM – celery and cheese sliders
Thursday: AM – cucumber and breadsticks PM – strawberries, orange and yoghurt	Thursday: AM – carrot and crackers PM – banana and crumpet
Friday: AM – raisins and crackers PM – celery sticks, and beans on toast	Friday: AM – pear and breadsticks PM – tomato pasta and cucumber



The dates and contacts bit

The best way to speak to us about your child:

If you would like to talk about your child's learning please use the home school communication book. Our phone lines are open from 08:30 to 16:00 Monday to Thursday and until 15:30 on a Friday and we commit to responding to your calls and emails within 2 working days.

If you have any concerns, thoughts, ideas, please share them with us at tellus@vermontschool.co.uk.

INSET and key dates for this year

- 13th April 2026 - Structured conversation day
- 1st June 2026 - INSET day
- 20th, 21st and 22nd July 2026 - INSET days

Upcoming Dates

- National Storytelling Week - 2nd-6th February
- Safer Internet Day - 10th February

Online Safety

We have been made aware of a pop-up that is appearing on Roblox, encouraging children to download an app called pollybuzz (or pollyfuzz in some spelling cases). The app seems quite simple where children are asked questions, and it generates an Artificial Intelligence 'friend' - this starts off quite innocently but then begins to show extreme content (including suicide, self-harm and pornography). Please remind children about not clicking on pop-ups in games and to report anything that is worrying or inappropriate to a trusted adult.

There are also some links here that may help.

<https://www.itv.com/watch/news/extremist-content-exposed-on-gaming-platform-roblox/z0htgkh>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-safety-blog/roblox/>

Please click on the link [here](#) to see some free online course for parents and carers to access in regards to online safety.

Online Safety Newsletter

June 2025

Virtual Reality (VR)

VR is a 3D computer generated environment that users can explore wearing a VR Headset.

Meta Quest Parental Controls
Meta Quest are one of the more popular VR Headsets. Users aged 13+ can use Meta Quest (children between 10 and 12 years old can use it through a parent managed account). Meta Quest state that VR Headsets are not recommended for use by younger or smaller-sized children for a variety of reasons including eye strain. Optional supervision tools are available for those aged 13-17. Find out more here: <https://familycenter.meta.com/uk/our-products/horizon-and-quest/>

Meta Quest has a Safety Centre; it includes health and safety warnings and how to set privacy settings. <https://www.meta.com/gb/quest/safety-center/>

Gorilla Tag
This is a popular game and whilst rated as PEGI 3 (even though young children should not be using VR), it is important to note that it does include in app purchases and players can interact so there is a risk of offensive/inappropriate language. <https://www.esrb.org/blog/a-parents-guide-to-gorilla-tag/>

What can I do?
- Check what games your child is accessing and make sure they are appropriate.
- Play together.
- Set time limits and ensure plenty of breaks.

Further information:
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/virtual-reality-headsets/>

Online Privacy

It is important to develop an understanding of how you can protect your child's privacy online. Any personal information shared online creates a digital footprint and it is vital that we control who sees what.

What are Privacy settings?
Privacy settings are tools available on most social media apps, websites, and games. They allow users to control who can view what they share online.

What can we do to support our children with their online privacy?
Talk to your child regularly: Talk to your child about what is personal information and to think about what they share online. Personal information includes their name, address, current location and the school they attend. This also includes information within photos or videos that they may share, for example does it show their current location?

Apply appropriate privacy settings: For any app, game or device that your child uses, check the privacy settings and apply them as appropriate. For example:

- o Check if their location is being shared.
- o Check who can tag them in posts (as what others tag them in can also affect their digital footprint).
- o Check who can share their content.

Check these settings regularly as new options may become available or sometimes updates can change previous settings.

Children learn from us: Think about what you are sharing online – do you share photos of your child in their school uniform or their current location?

Set strong/complex passwords: Teach your child to create strong/complex passwords and to never share them with others.

Search their name – search their name in a search engine to see what information can be seen about your child. Remind your child that they can delete any information that they no longer want others to see.

Further Information

- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/taking-care-your-digital-footprint/>
- <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/child-care/online-privacy>
- <https://www.csoeducation.co.uk/11-18/lets-talk-about/online-safety/privacy-settings/>

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Instagram

You must be over 13 years of age to set up an account. Instagram is used to post photos and videos as well as send direct messages, make voice/video calls, and send disappearing messages. Users can also upload to 'stories' (which disappear after 24 hours), broadcast live and upload reels (short videos).

Teen accounts

Teen accounts are automatically set up for users aged 13 – 17. Teens under the age of 16 will need your permission to update their safety settings. With a Teen Account, additional safety settings are applied, for example, who your child can contact is limited and the content they access will be set to the most restrictive setting to reduce exposure to sensitive content. Find out more here: <https://help.instagram.com/995996839195964>

Supervision settings

Instagram also offers a supervision facility, which is a set of tools that you can use to help support your child. It is important to note that both you and your child must agree to these settings, and they can be removed at any time by either person. Once set up you can:

- Set a time limit.
- See which accounts your child is following and who is following them.
- View who your child has messaged in the past week (you will not be able to see the contents of these messages)
- The option to block your child from accessing Instagram at certain times e.g. during school or at night.

Find out more here:

https://help.instagram.com/658522825492278/?helpref=related_articles

How to Reset Your Instagram Recommendations

You can reset recommendations, which will clear recommended content across Explore, Reels and Feed. You can find out more here:

<https://about.fb.com/news/2024/11/introducing-recommendations-reset-instagram/>

What are the risks of using Instagram?

- Cyberbullying
- Risk of contact from strangers.
- Viewing inappropriate content.
- Echo chambers - algorithms can create an echo chamber. Once we show an interest in a subject, the app/site will promote that content, which may mean we are overly exposed to it.

Safety Features

If your child is using Instagram, then ensure they know how to report posts and people, how to unfollow/block people as well as delete and turn off comments. Find out how: <https://help.instagram.com/269765046710559>

More information

Visit the family centre to learn more about the features available:

<https://familycenter.meta.com/uk/>

Talking to your child about online mistakes

The online world is difficult to navigate, and mistakes will happen. When they do, it is important that as a parent you are ready.

Stay Calm

If your child tells you about something that they have done wrong online, then try to stay calm and listen.

Be Honest

You may not know how to solve the issue but tell them you will help them work it out.

Solve It Together

Try and resolve the problem together to help your child learn and understand what went wrong. This will also develop their digital literacy skills.

You should also take the opportunity to review/set up any available parental controls.

Help and Support

If you feel like you need support from an external organisation, then Parent Zone have listed some of the different organisations available:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/help-and-support>

Further information:

<https://www.brightcanary.io/what-to-do-when-your-child-tends-to-inappropriate-things/>

Texting dictionary from Internet Matters

Internet Matters have created a list of text language terms to help you understand some of the text slang that your child might be using. Find out more here: <https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/text-dictionary/>

Online gaming and social media
Young people can see all kinds of things online via social media and through online games. The popularity of online gaming has given streamers more opportunity to make their narrative sound more mainstream and reach out and radicalise others. What usually starts off as conversations on mainstream platforms can quickly escalate when the person being targeted is invited into closed groups, chatrooms and forums.

Tips on how to stay safe online:

- Have a conversation with your child about the potential dangers of being invited into closed groups or chatrooms.
- Talk to your child about who they are connecting with online. People and situations online are not always what they might at first seem to be.
- Talk to your child about how radicalisers search tweets, chatroom forums and social media profiles, and posts to identify people who may be vulnerable.

What information is being shared online?
Games are a great way to make friends online, but are they sharing too much personal information.

Choose a safe username
Make sure usernames (don't) include their full name, date of birth, address or mobile number.

Who are they playing with?
Online gaming can allow users to play with friends and strangers from around the world. Remember people might not always be honest about who they are.

Explore online together
Sit down with your child and learn about what websites and apps they like. Are they viewing age appropriate content?

Check your privacy settings
Changing their privacy settings can affect who can see they are online and who they play with. If they download new apps, remind them to review and adjust privacy and safety settings. Check they know how to use privacy settings.

RADICALISATION AND THE INTERNET
Is your loved one safe online?

Be vigilant

Have a conversation about what they are using and who they are talking to online

Check content is appropriate

Don't give out personal information

Use parental controls

Spot the signs of online radicalisation

- Are they becoming increasingly intolerant to other people's views?
- Are they sharing and liking extremist posts on social media?
- Are they being secretive about who they are talking to online?
- Are they reading, posting, watching or sharing hateful or extreme content and links?
- Do they appear to be expressing someone else's views?

Please visit the websites in the 'advice and support' section for more information about staying safe online.

ADVICE AND SUPPORT

- Act Early**
actearly.uk
- Internet Matters**
internetmatters.org
- Safer Internet**
safersinternet.org.uk
- Parent Zone**
parentzone.org.uk
- Think You Know**
thinkuknow.co.uk

We are all using the internet more than ever before and so it's increasingly important to know what to look out for and how to protect our loved ones online.

The internet has opened up many new opportunities in communication, entertainment and knowledge. But it's also given extremists the means to target, connect and communicate with people vulnerable to radicalisation.

Anyone can be at risk of being radicalised regardless of their age, but teenagers and young people can sometimes be at greater risk. Radicalisers are very good at identifying people's anxieties and exploiting vulnerability. They will offer them a new narrative or a way out from how they are feeling.

It's not easy to challenge a young person who wants their privacy – and your trust. But it's important to find out who they might be coming into contact with online. Having a conversation about online radicalisation and extremism early and often is vital. It's important to engage with your loved ones about the dangers of the internet and have ongoing conversations.

Mobile Phone Safety

Mobile phones are becoming an everyday part of children and young people's lives, bringing many benefits for learning, communication, and staying connected. However, it's important that phones are set up safely and appropriately for a child's age and stage of development.

Parental and adult controls are a key tool in helping to keep children safe online. These controls allow adults to:

- Limit access to age-inappropriate websites, apps, and content
- Set screen-time limits and downtime
- Approve app downloads and in-app purchases
- Monitor or restrict contact with unknown users

Most smartphones and tablets include built-in parental control settings, and mobile network providers also offer filters that can block adult or unsuitable content. Taking time to set these up when a child first gets a phone can make a big difference.

Locking down phones to age-appropriate content doesn't mean removing independence, it's about creating a safe digital environment. Controls can be gradually adjusted as children grow older, helping them learn to manage technology responsibly while still having appropriate safeguards in place.

Alongside technical settings, open conversations are just as important. Encourage children to talk about what they see online, who they communicate with, and to ask for help if something makes them feel uncomfortable. Reminding them not to share personal information and to think carefully before posting or messaging can help build good digital habits.

By combining parental controls, age-appropriate settings, and regular conversations, we can help children enjoy the benefits of mobile technology while staying safe and supported.

Thrive

The children at Vermont School are here because they have an education health and care plan which has social emotional and mental health as one of their primary areas of need. The Thrive approach is about having an understanding of neuroscience (brain development), children development and attachment theory.

We identify possible gaps in development and help to fill those gaps using a creative and playful approach. Thrive is preventative, reparative, pragmatic and easy to use.

Thrive Practice

Each and every one of our children will benefit from Thrive practice and we currently have two Thrive Licensed Practitioners in training at the school: Miss Louisa and Miss Alana. The changes that Thrive has brought about can already be seen in the language used with children and also in the activities that children take part in as all our pupils are already making fantastic progress.

Please take a look at our website - under curriculum for full details of what Thrive looks like at school. If you would like to find out any more about Thrive, please let us know at tellus@vermontschool.co.uk.

Embracing Thrive: a parent and carers guide



The Thrive Approach®

For over 25 years, Thrive has been working with schools, settings and organisations to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Thrive equips educators with training, resources and an award-winning online tool, so they can better understand children and young people's needs and provide targeted, effective support.

With its focus on building secure relationships and providing positive experiences, Thrive helps young people to feel safe, supported and ready to learn.

Building positive relationships

The connections children and young people have with the adults around them are key to their social and emotional development. Thrive activities focus on providing positive experiences and building trusting relationships. This helps young people to:

- Feel good about themselves and know that they matter
- Feel safe and secure in school
- Improve their emotional wellbeing
- Improve their capacity to be creative and curious
- Build their self-esteem and confidence to learn
- Recognise and manage their feelings
- Think before behaving in a certain way...and much more!

How does it work?

Thrive equips educators with strategies and activities to help build young people's social and emotional skills, as well as develop their ability to manage stress and take on life's ups and downs.

The Approach is underpinned by neuroscience, attachment theory and child development research and is suitable for children and young people aged 0-25 years.

What difference does Thrive make?

Schools that have adopted the Thrive Approach have reported many benefits. These include calmer classrooms with fewer disruptions, improved attendance, reduced exclusions and higher achievements. To hear first-hand from settings already using Thrive, visit mythrive.uk/case_studies.

How will my child be involved in Thrive?

Your child will be profiled using Thrive-Online, an award-winning tool used to measure and monitor social and emotional development. Thrive-Online has behaviour and skills surveys that help staff to see where young people are in their development and identify any pupils who could benefit from additional support.

Thrive-Online profiling will be led by school practitioners who will:

- Assess classes, groups and individuals to see where they are in their social and emotional development
- Create targeted action plans to help pupils to manage their behaviour, build emotional resilience and become more open to learning
- Measure and report on progress over time

Find out more

There is lots more information on the Thrive website: thriveapproach.com.

"Thrive has helped my son tremendously. It has given him more confidence and also it has helped him to calm down in difficult situations. I can see a huge difference in him. He looks forward to his Thrive time."

Parent

thrive
Removing barriers to learning



Families trial new digital support to help children with ADHD sleep better

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/ctu/news/2025/11/families-trial-new-digital-support-to-help-children-with-adhd-sleep-better.page>

News from around the city

You're invited!  **NetSupport**
bett ExCel London

We hope to see you there!

Our valued partner, NetSupport (classroom management, safeguarding and IT management solutions specialists) is exhibiting at Bett UK from 21-23 January 2026!

If you are attending the show, we strongly recommend adding NetSupport to your list of **must-see vendors**. They offer a great range of functionality for schools and trusts looking to improve their classroom, safeguarding and IT management capabilities.

Please let me know if you're planning to visit and we can organise a meeting with our **NetSupport contact** alongside you or on your behalf.



 **South East Grid for Learning**
krista.pickering@segfl.org.uk

Bett show - 21-23 January 2026 - ExCel London - NetSupport Stand SH50

 **Spotlight UK**
Scarlett's Smiles
Creating positive memories

RAFFLE £3 PER TICKET

WIN A WEEK FAMILY BREAK TO BUTLINS THIS MAY HALF TERM





Scan here or email activities@spotlightuk.org to enter

The money raised will support local children affected by loss, children in care, young carers, children with long term disabilities or terminal illness, children affected by domestic abuse

Charity No. 1129258