

CASE STUDY

HAVERFORDWEST HIGH VC SCHOOL (11-18)



SCHOOL CONTEXT

Haverfordwest High VC School (HHVCS) is situated in Haverfordwest, the county town of Pembrokeshire. It has a school roll of 1600 pupils of which 70(4%) come from Armed Forces families, predominately serving at the nearby Cawdor Barracks with whom the school has strong links. HHVCS has recently become the first secondary School in Wales to have achieved the Armed Forces Friendly Schools (AFFS) Cymru Gold status.

“Congratulations on attaining Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru status. I am very proud of the support schools in Wales are giving to the children of our Armed Forces. I want all children and young people to be supported to achieve their best. It is right that we recognise and celebrate your achievements.”

(Jeremy Miles MS, Education Minister, Welsh Government)



MORE INFO:

<https://www.haverfordwesthigh.pembrokeshire.sch.uk/>

<https://www.scipalliance.org/thriving-lives-toolkit>



SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent. School leaders will be beginning to raise awareness of what is needed to support Armed Forces children and young people more effectively and will be reflecting on the impact of their existing support strategies to strengthen these.	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle's question to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation. School leaders will have considered how they are addressing this principle's question and are taking steps to embark on a regular programme of reflection, monitoring and evaluation. Practice at this level is likely to be either not fully embedded or consistently applied by all staff, or both.	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle's question with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact. School leaders will have fully addressed this principle's question and regularly monitor, review and evaluate their strategies to demonstrate the impact. Practice at this level will be both embedded and consistently applied by all staff.

EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

1.1 <i>To what extent are all those involved in leadership, governance and Armed Forces support aware of funding and other resources available to support Armed Forces children?</i> - The school has a Deputy Headteacher directly responsible for supporting Armed Forces Children and identifying and sourcing funding from external funders. - The Senior Leadership Team is regularly briefed on externally funded activities such as funding for the school's <i>Forces Life Club</i>. - The Deputy Headteacher regularly meets with the school's two Armed Forces Children (AFC) Coordinators and the Supporting Service Children in Education's (SSCE Cymru) Regional Liaison Officer (RLO) to discuss resources and additional funding sources. - The school's senior management is confident that the school has a fully informed network of all stakeholders involved in the direct support of our Armed Forces Children.	EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING
1.2 <i>To what extent do you monitor how dedicated funding is spent?</i> - In Wales, funding bids are submitted through the SSCE Regional Liaison Officer and approved by the SSCE Programme Manager. - At HHVCS, dedicated funding is managed and accounted for by one of the AFC Coordinators, who is also the school's Finance Officer. - Whilst it is difficult to measure the impact of a visit/activity against academic outcomes, the improvements in pupils' confidence, behaviour and team cohesion are clear to see. - Senior management is aware that more work is required to measure overall academic outcomes and whether there are any visible improvements following financial investment in trips/activities.	EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING
1.3 <i>To what extent is support informed by evidence and monitored for effectiveness?</i> - This is an area where, following the completion of the SCiP Alliance's <i>Thriving Lives Toolkit</i> self-evaluation framework, senior management was aware that further work would be beneficial. - Leaders also identified that this came with an equally significant workload which they were unable to provide from existing resources. For the school's AFC population, it would be a full-time job. - Unfortunately, the school's funding bid for a 12-month trial of a dedicated post was unsuccessful, so the school is currently planning how to make progress within the resources it has available.	EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING

1.4

To what extent do Armed Forces family voices and Armed Forces representation inform those responsible for leadership, governance and Armed Forces support?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- There is a permanent place on the School Council for an AFC representative.
- The representative is chosen by the school's *Forces Life Club*.
- There is also a school governor who is a serving member of the Armed Forces.
- The school has developed very strong links with the Welfare Officer and Army Welfare Worker at the local 14 Signal Regiment and they regularly meet to discuss issues affecting AFCs and their families.
- School facilities are made available for welfare meetings, counselling sessions and the Pembrokeshire Armed Forces Forum.
- The school's Service Ambassadors liaise with families to welcome them when they arrive, help them settle in and listen to their views.
- Feedback from the activities/forums listed provides invaluable information which ensures that Armed Forces families' voices are heard and informs the work of the school.

1.5

To what extent do those responsible for school governance ensure Armed Forces children's outcomes are monitored and appropriate support is delivered?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Whilst a high level of support is provided in school for young people from Armed Forces families, more rigorous monitoring has been identified by school leaders to assess the effectiveness of this support.
- Despite the school's efforts, including enhancements to its [website](#) where there is a dedicated Service Pupil Support section, it has faced challenges in making substantial advancements due to resource limitations

1.6

To what extent do your admissions arrangements take account of Armed Forces families' frequent, mid-term and short notice move?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The school has a very clear Admissions Policy which specifically mentions advice for AFC. This policy is available under the bespoke Service Families section of the school website and shared with the Welfare Officer at 14 Signal Regiment.
- The school has a 3 person AFC support team, headed by a Deputy Headteacher. The team is the focal point for all things military in the school and actively coordinates with AFC regularly. The team is supported by the in-house Service Family Liaison Team, Learning Mentors and Service Ambassadors.
- Through regular meetings with the Welfare Office, school staff are aware of moves, both in and out of the school, and can support AFC accordingly. The school's *Forces Life Club* also provides valuable information and support when AFC are moving.

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

One of the key learning points that came from completing the SCiP Toolkit is the importance of being completely honest in the self-assessment. We became aware of the shortfalls in our provision in a number of areas that, prior to the self-assessment, we thought were OK. This enabled us to address these areas and improve our level of overall support to our Service children. The second key learning point is to understand that this is a team effort, both internally and externally. We are a very large Secondary School (1600 pupils) with 70+ Service children. We have a team of three staff who manage our internal support, including one of our Deputy Headteachers. Externally, we

have received a huge amount of support, advice and funding from SSCE Cymru and numerous visits from Armed Forces Engagement Teams.

Finally, don't forget your Service families. We are fortunate in that most of the parents of our Service children are based locally at a single Army Regiment. We maintain close links with the Regimental Welfare Office, the Army Welfare Worker and the Regimental Communities Officer. Invite your families into the school at every opportunity and ensure that they know who to contact if there are any service specific issues.