

CASE STUDY

CARNAGILL PRIMARY SCHOOL (4-11)



SCHOOL CONTEXT

Carnagill Primary School is a member of the Dales Academy Trust and is located within the garrison town of Catterick, North Yorkshire. At the time of writing, there were 173 children on roll with 71% (123) identified as Service children. Military parents work in the army but are spread across at least 13 different units ranging from infanters to medics, engineers to military police. Catterick Garrison, with a population over 13,000 and expanding, is the largest British Army garrisons in the world covering more than 10 square kilometres, and home to one of the largest Infantry Training Centres in the UK. A senior teacher has the nominated role of Service Pupil Leader and there is also a full-time Learning Mentor and Thrive Practitioner on the staff team.

<https://www.carnagill.dalesmat.org/>

MORE INFO:

<https://www.carnagill.dalesmat.org/parents/children-from-military-families/>

This case study describes how school leaders used the self-evaluation framework for Principle 2 to both reflect on its pastoral support to pupils and strengthen it. This led to greater visibility of the school's links to the military and raising awareness of all staff of some of the unique challenges Armed Forces families must manage. The case study explores these, as well as promotes the work of the school's Learning Mentor and Thrive practitioner.



<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

2.1 To what extent do you create opportunities for Armed Forces children to meet, and explore experiences together?	EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING
- A drop-in lunchtime club called the Den runs on Mondays and Fridays for an hour staffed by at least two adults. Service children who attend are provided with creative activities, music and Lego, and the staff focus on 'noticing' them and hearing their voices. Other staff signpost children to the Den when appropriate, especially at times of parental deployment. - The school's Service Pupil Leader undertakes periodic pupil voice activities to explore aspects of military lifestyle with them, such as school to school transition. - During some of the school holidays, open sessions for military families are offered to support social interaction and through its Seesaw learning platform a dedicated Service Families classroom is used to signpost to garrison activities (e.g., those run by the Army Welfare Service). - The school is a regular supporter of cross-school activities, such as an annual Remembrance service at Ripon Cathedral and an Armed Forces Day event run by the Garrison in June.	
2.2 To what extent is your pastoral support informed by Armed Forces children's voices?	EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING
- School leaders provide Armed Forces children with opportunities to share their views about the support they would like, and this influences provision. For example, welcome certificates used to be given to all pupils shortly after joining during assemblies. However, some reported finding this awkward so now a choice is given, with the Headteacher bringing the certificate to a child's classroom if that is preferred. - School staff are knowledgeable about Armed Forces families' lived experiences so recognise the specific needs of children. The Learning Mentor has a very open-door policy, especially at breaktimes, which is often taken up by Armed Forces children who regularly chat with her about challenges they are experiencing. This informs support.	

2.3

To what extent do you have mechanisms to provide tailored support when Armed Forces children need it while ensuring that they are not singled out unnecessarily?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Daily emotional check-ins occur in all classes. The school's Learning Mentor visits all classes first thing in the morning to check in on targeted pupils, who give her a visual signal if they want to speak. Support then provided is tailored to the individual's needs.
- One-to-one and small group Thrive sessions are timetabled based on the screening of **all** pupils. Informal referrals from class teachers are made for the Learning Mentor's support for individual pupils. This staff member also regularly drops into classes to observe children, to actively 'notice' things, and then to offer information and advice to staff.
- The school's nominated Service Pupils Leader keeps abreast of best practice by accessing online countywide network training sessions when available, by researching the offer provided by relevant charities and organisations. A recent example of how this has strengthened the school's provision is in the creation of two Year 6 Service Children's Ambassadors in the summer term of 2023. Their roles are evolving through experience.

2.4

To what extent does pastoral support take account of points of stress including deployment / weekending, school moves and caring responsibilities?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- All staff are made aware of these key points of stress through an internal document called [What is it like to be a military child?](#) This summarises the key stages of a transition experience model as well as the Emotional Cycle of Deployment.
- Armed Forces parents are encouraged to inform staff if a parent is going to be away for a lengthy period, with a Deployment Form provided. A recent enhancement has been the ability to access this form quickly through mobile phones via a QR code widely displayed.
- Parents are encouraged to complete a Postings Form as soon as they become aware that they will be leaving the school. These allow staff to act quickly in terms of transferring records but also in supporting the children who will be leaving, when beneficial.
- Strong links are maintained with unit welfare staff and the Garrison Commander to keep abreast of military plans which might impact the school's families.
- The geography subject leader has built into the curriculum learning about places parents regularly deploy to (e.g., Poland) as well as some countries that many parents call home.

2.5

To what extent do you nurture Armed Forces children's identities, and help them feel understood?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Senior leaders have considerable experience of supporting military families and they are celebrated; the school's website makes this clear from its home page and the Headteacher's written welcome.
- Positive narratives of the Armed Forces are built into the curriculum and displays around school evidence the pride staff have of the school's military connections.
- Opportunities are created to bring members of the military community into school and to raise awareness of the school's civilian pupils of Armed Forces lifestyle.

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

- It is important to follow the principles of effective nurture to support Service children's emotional health and wellbeing; unless that is right, academic progress will falter. Being a Thrive school really supports us in this work.
<https://www.thriveapproach.com/>
- Staff try to notice everything about our pupils and validate all emotions. We buy into the key messages promoted by Paul Dix, the behaviour specialist, that 'When the adult changes, everything changes'.

 One little comment an adult in school says to a child can have a real negative impact in years to come – language is so important. We must therefore focus on the positives children have. Kindness goes a long way."

(School's Learning Mentor)