

CASE STUDY

GRATELEY PRIMARY SCHOOL (4-11)



SCHOOL CONTEXT

Grateley Primary School is a Local Authority maintained school, situated just outside Andover in the west of Hampshire, close to the Wiltshire border and the Army Air Corps, Army Aviation Centre, at Middle Wallop. There are 93 pupils on roll, of which 39 (42%) have parents serving in the Army. Currently, only three of these Service children live in the school's catchment area. Most serving parents are stationed at, and their families live close to, the Tidworth Camp, Bulford base, Army HQ or the Army Aviation Centre. Parents reportedly choose Grateley Primary, as opposed to the large schools close to Tidworth or in Andover, due to the small-school community, the reputation of the school for its provision for Service pupils and sometimes because parents want to educate their children beyond the immediate confines of military life. Mobility amongst the Service cohort is quite high and several Service children have both parents serving in the Army. This presents particular challenges for the school during times of parental deployment. The Acting Headteacher (AHT) has strategic responsibility for Service children. She is supported by two Teaching Assistants (TAs) with dedicated time for Service children, one of whom is a qualified Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA). <https://www.grateley.hants.sch.uk>

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This case study describes how leaders at Grateley Primary School support the emotional well-being and personal development of its Service children. Although not a homogenous group, the AHT has identified that their Service children can either be very confident and resilient, or anxious and apprehensive, particularly during short-notice, short-term deployments of their serving parents.



MORE INFO:

<https://www.grateley.hants.sch.uk/page/?title=Service+Families&pid=30>

<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
- The TAs run a weekly Camo Club for an hour on a Friday afternoon. All Service children are allowed to attend one of two 30-minute sessions which are organised according to need, for example, serving parents deployed and not deployed, or KS1 and KS2. The children engage in art and other creative activities, Circle Time, team-building and making food, as well as mingling and talking to other children about their lived experiences. The children contribute ideas to the Club. - The TAs also provide one-to-one sessions – including Emotional Literacy Support (ELS) - in times of need, often during short-notice, short-term deployments of serving parents. - Currently, the school does not engage with other schools to provide opportunities for Service children to meet and share their experiences. Given the close proximity of three other small schools with high proportions of Service children, this is something the AHT is keen to pursue. - Older Service children occasionally plan and lead whole-school assemblies to share and celebrate aspects of their lifestyles. For special performances, such as a music show or dance show, parents are invited to attend and, for those who are away or deployed, live video coverage – through a WhatsApp video call – is provided. - The school has recently purchased new library books with positive stories about military life.		
2.2	To what extent is your pastoral support informed by Armed Forces children's voices?	EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING
- All staff recognise, and understand, the needs of Service children and their families. Several staff have military ties. Regular updates are provided for all staff on family circumstances. - Service children can share their views about the support they receive and/or would like during the weekly Camo Club, one-to-one sessions and an annual pupil survey.		

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

- Support mechanisms for Service children are triggered on admission to the school. A suite of diagnostic assessments – reading age, spelling age, phonics, etc. – is undertaken with all children. Additional needs (e.g. SEND, EAL) are identified and support is put in place.
- The school's New Starter Form identifies Service children. The TAs are immediately notified and one-to-one sessions organised as well as an invite to the Camo Club generated.
- One-to-one pastoral support for Service children is tailored to individual needs and documented.

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

- The TAs keep abreast of localised points of stress including postings, deployments and weekending. They know their Service families well and, crucially, have developed secure relationships with them. However, the AHT acknowledges that parents do not always inform the school about imminent deployments: "some keep them hidden despite our best endeavours".
- The AHT and TAs are clear that the majority of Service children are well-adjusted to life in school and generally cope well with changing family circumstances. However, palpably, it is the short-notice and sudden deployments that particularly cause anxiety and upset on the part of affected children. At these times, the Armed Forces TAs provide one-to-one support and increase parental engagement.
- The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is an important source of information for the school. Members of the PTA are well-informed about Army activity. Members make links with new Service families, providing an additional welcome to the school.
- The school has good links with the local Army Welfare Service which helps the TAs find out about postings, forthcoming deployments and important training patterns which could impact on the children.

2.5

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The school holds an Armed Forces Day each summer. Serving parents organise military vehicles to come onto site and set up an assault course for all children to enjoy. In addition, Service children are able to share their lived experiences to help other children better understand their lives.
- Older Service children lead whole-school assemblies, for example, on Remembrance Day and to celebrate their lifestyles. For special performances, live video coverage – through a WhatsApp video call – is provided for parents who are away or deployed.
- Termly coffee mornings are held for parents of Service children. The AHT uses this opportunity to share updates on the school's [Service Pupil Premium Strategy Statement](#), and consult them on existing provision and future improvements. Minutes are taken, distributed and acted upon.
- The school website has a dedicated, and informative [page](#) for Service Families.

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

Senior leaders and staff must listen – genuinely and authentically - to their Service children and other family members, particularly in relation to the school offer and how it can be improved. This is because they have a view and perspective on how the school can best meet the needs of children.'