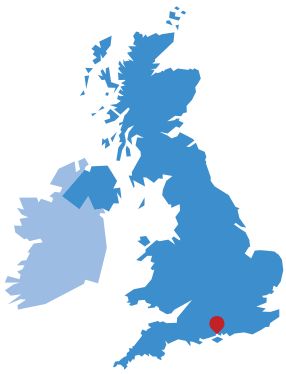
CASE STUDY

MARCHWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL (7-11)



This case study describes how Marchwood Junior School has strengthened Service pupil voice across the school by raising the profile of Service children, its 'MJS Troopers', provided regular opportunities for them to come together, developed ambassadorial roles amongst some of its older Service children and raised the profile of the school's military context through school newsletters.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Marchwood Junior School is a Local Authority maintained school, situated on the western edge of Southampton, Hampshire, close to the New Forest and Fawley oil refinery. There are 310 pupils on roll, of which 69 (22%) have parents serving in the military, predominantly the Army. Most of these are stationed at the nearby Marchwood Military Port. The Service cohort includes four children who are eligible for Pupil Premium (PP) funding in addition to Service Pupil Premium (SSP) funding and a mix of ethnic backgrounds with eight Fijian children and eleven black African children, mostly from Ghana. A few of these children have English as an Additional Language (EAL). One of the two Assistant Headteachers (AHT) has strategic responsibility for Service children as part of his role. A class teacher on the Upper Pay Range (UPR) assumes day-to-day operational responsibility.

https://www.marchwood-jun.hants.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

5.1 *To what extent are Armed Forces children represented in school and other forums?*

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Annually at the start of the academic year, and after a lengthy and exhaustive appointment process, two Year 5/6 *MJS Troopers* are appointed as *Service Ambassadors*. They attend regular meetings of the *Junior Leadership Team* as well as assuming ambassadorial responsibilities.
- Service children are proactively targeted, encouraged and supported in their applications to be *Service Ambassadors*. At the time of writing, the *Head Girl* is a Service child.
- The two *Service Ambassadors* act as a 'go-between' Service children and the UPR teacher with designated responsibility. They represent their peers at events including the termly *MJS Troopers* themed days, *Little Troopers* events and external initiatives.
- Following the success of these ambassadorial roles, older *MJS Troopers* are now elected each year to act as *Peer Mentors* for younger Service children.

5.2 *To what extent do Armed Forces children's voices inform your strategies, approach and actions throughout the school?*

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- *Service Ambassadors*, as members of the *Junior Leadership Team*, have their views listened to in order to help inform school improvement activity. An example of their influence was the launching of a *Drop-In Club* for Service children.
- The *Drop-In Club* is held weekly, providing a safe space for Service children to come together to play games, undertake *Little Troopers* activities and talk to one another and key staff. Children's views are captured, with key points shared widely across the staff team and key points actioned.
- The Army Welfare Service (AWS) Community Development Worker from the nearby base regularly runs small group sessions in school. He offers opportunities for Service children to complete activities and have a chat on a group or one-to-one basis, supporting them in times of need – in relation to emotion and behaviour. In addition, he provides a further link between the school and base by running the AWS Youth Club on the base.
- The school have recently appointed the Army Welfare Officer as a governor of the school.
- The school has a *Worry Monster*, a character who any child can write to about worries and problems in the knowledge they will be followed up. Service children often write to this character.
- In times of need, Service children are provided with Emotional Literacy Support (ELS), one-to-one sessions within which they can talk to a trusted adult.
- Regular updates for parents on the work of the MJS Troopers are provided in newsletters which are distributed to all key stakeholders.

5.3 ***To what extent do Armed Forces children feel heard and understood?***

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- An annual pupil forum, at the start of the academic year, provides an opportunity to elicit the views and opinions of Service children.
- Annual pupil surveys allow Service children to express their views and opinions on aspects of school life as well as their own unique circumstances.
- In 2018, *MJS Troopers* worked together to produce a *Diversity Exhibition*, a celebration of the backgrounds of Service children in the school.
- In 2022, 65 *MJS Troopers* participated in a two-hour *Little Troopers Wellbeing and Mindfulness Workshop*, a virtual event hosted by two well-known TV personalities, Katie Thistleton and Frankie Vu. The children were able to discuss some of the unique challenges of military life such as having a parent deployed and moving home/school.

5.4 ***To what extent do you act on feedback and ideas from Armed Forces children?***

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The school acts on ideas from Service children, mainly through the annual forum, annual pupil surveys and *Service Ambassadors* attending, and contributing to, *Junior Leadership Team* meetings.
- Feedback from Service children at the weekly *Drop-In Club*, group and one-to-one sessions with the AWS Officer and/or ELS sessions, in discussion with *Peer Mentors* and during organised events is also acted upon.

5.5 ***To what extent do you monitor and communicate your actions in response to listening to Armed Forces children?***

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The AHT, with support from the teacher with designated responsibility, monitors informally how the school's actions impact on Service children and uses this information to report to staff and parents, for example, through displays and newsletters.

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

'What makes a real difference is the provision of a safe space for Service children to regularly (weekly) spend time where they feel comfortable and at ease so they can talk. Talking really matters to these children, particularly in times of need.'

The provision for Service children was praised by Ofsted in the school's November 2018 inspection, when it was judged as 'Outstanding':

Staff recognise the particular emotional needs of children who have a parent in the army and have developed the Marchwood Troopers group to support them. Leaders use specific funding for pupils from Service families exceptionally well. They have a keen sense of what is important to pupils and their community. For example, to commemorate the sacrifice of the 19 Marchwood men who lost their lives in the First World War the 'Marchwood Troopers', a group of pupils from Service families, led the school in creating a remembrance garden. This enabled the Marchwood Troopers, and the rest of the school, to remember not only the fallen but their own parents who are still serving'

(Parent)