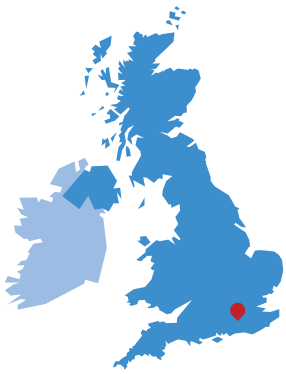
CASE STUDY

TALAVERA INFANT SCHOOL (4-11)



This case study describes how leaders at Talavera Infant School give Service children a voice so they are heard. Over a number of years, the HT has made highly effective use of the Thriving Lives Toolkit as a self-evaluative tool and to help inform its improvement activity for Service children who feed into the process. In addition, the HT writes a Service Pupil Premium (SPP) Strategy Statement each year detailing its use of SPP funding.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Talavera Infant School is a Local Authority (LA) maintained school in Aldershot, Hampshire, a stone's throw from the main Aldershot Army Garrison. There are 270 pupils on roll, of which 155 (57%) have parents serving in the military, most of whom are stationed at the nearby Garrison. A high proportion of Service children come from an ethnic minority background – mainly Nepalese and Fijian – and 66 have English as an Additional Language (EAL). Mobility is low, mainly due to the Army's commitment to support families in settling and the high number of lower-ranking personnel amongst serving parents. The Headteacher (HT) reports that there have been no regimental moves in the Garrison over the past five years. The school enjoys an excellent reputation locally, is heavily oversubscribed in all year groups - with long waiting lists in place - and will soon be opening new classes. The Deputy Headteacher (DHT) has strategic responsibility for Service children. She is supported by two Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) who assume day-to-day operational responsibility

https://www.talaverainfantschool.co.uk



MORE INFO:

https://www.talaverainfantschool.co.uk/key-information/service-premium/

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

Service Children's Progression ALLIANCE

CASE STUDY: TALAVERA INFANT SCHOOL

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

- Service children are represented on the *School Council* (currently 50%) which has been proactive in several recent whole-school initiatives, for example, the development of a Forest School, improving the outdoor learning environment and redesigning playtimes.
- Each academic year, the school appoints children in each class to act as *New Arrival Ambassadors* who effectively act as buddies for new children, including those from a Service background.
- Service children have been chosen deliberately to contribute to discussions with external visitors including Ofsted inspectors, the LA Leadership and Learning Partner and the Mayor of Aldershot, the latter two during recent visits to the school.

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The weekly Camo Club provides regular opportunities for Service children to talk about their lived experiences and explore and express their feelings, views and opinions. *Camo Club* is run each Friday afternoon, with two sessions of 1.5 hours, held during school time and catering for up to 30 children. It is led by a member of the Aldershot Garrison Chaplaincy Team, a well-known member of the local community, and two ELSAs. Priority is given to new arrivals and children whose serving parents are deployed. All Service children attend the *Club* for a minimum of 2-3 weeks at some stage during the academic year. The children eat cheese and biscuits, and enjoy a range of activities, including art and craft, story time and talk time. Anything of importance is fed back to senior leaders to act on.
- During transition, both at the start of the academic year and during the year, the school quickly gets to know new children, including those from a Service background, and gives them a voice. Diagnostic assessments are carried out and one-to-ones held with one of the ELSAs.
- New arrivals complete a Welcome Booklet detailing information about themselves and their learning at their previous school. They also complete a section entitled, *'Is there anything you don't like or anything you would like us to help you with?'*
- Leavers complete a My Passport, providing important information for their new school.
- The ELSAs provide one-to-one sessions for Service children – including Emotional Literacy Support (ELS) and nurture - in times of need, often during the deployment of their serving parents.
- In line with the school's Safeguarding Policy, teachers provide a Feelings Check-In every morning. Every child puts their name on a feelings chart indicating whether they are happy or sad; this can be moved, if necessary, during the school day. A member of staff then checks in with them if they are sad and provides some one-to-one time for them to talk.

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Two annual *Pupil Surveys* are conducted – one in October and the second at the end of the academic year – and these are designed to elicit children's views on a range of matters including their opinions on aspects of provision and changes they would like to see in school.
- Regular, targeted *Pupil Conferencing* is carried out – by subject leaders and/or governors - as part of the *Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle* and to help inform school improvement activity.
- Feedback from Service children indicates that they feel heard and understood, and are confident to express their views, whether positive or negative.
- Regular opportunities are provided for Service children to share their lived experiences so they are understood by others. For example, the school celebrates Armed Forces Day each June. In 2023, children designed and made small wooden discs depicting heroes in their lives. These were first displayed on the bandstand in Aldershot before being removed and made into a rainbow displayed in school. Another display in school celebrates the ethnic background of children from around the world.
- Senior leaders celebrate the achievements and accomplishments of **all** children, including those from a Service background, through regular newsletters to parents.

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Given the high proportion of Service children in the school, feedback and ideas from them are routinely acted on as part of whole-school activity, for example, through the *School Council*, annual *Pupil Surveys*, *Pupil Conferencing* and one-to-one sessions with the ELSAs. In addition, Service children express their ideas at the weekly *Camo Club*.
- All staff have been trained by the ELSAs as *Emotion Coaches*. This enables them to respond, sensitively and empathetically, to individual children in times of need, and validate how they are feeling. The approach gives a child the licence to lead discussion confidentially in a safe and secure setting in the knowledge that it is ok to feel how they feel.
- Service children's ideas are collated, discussed and followed up by senior leaders and the ELSAs, to help inform provision throughout the school. A good recent example of this was the inclusion of *Emotion Coaching* in the School Improvement Plan for 2022-2023 on the back of feedback from children who wanted all staff to understand their unique circumstances.

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- As part of the *Monitoring and Evaluation Cycle*, senior leaders and governors monitor how actions are impacted by the ideas offered by children, and this typically leads to further improvement.
- Currently, two governors have military links, one of whom is the nominated *Service Governor*. Annually, they take on an area of the School Improvement Plan linked to Service children. The outcomes of targeted governor visits are reported back to the full governing body.
- The achievements of Service children, as with all children, are shared with the whole school community, primarily through regular newsletters.

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

'Given the uniqueness of their circumstances, Service children must feel an absolute sense of belonging within their school community. Leaders in any school with Service children must make connections – with the children themselves, their parents and their extended families - in order to empathise with them and ensure they feel as if they're in the right place.'

The School Council is really important and I feel proud that we have helped to make the school more fun so we can play with our friends here.'

(School councillor)