CASE STUDY

LE CATEAU COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL (3-11)



SCHOOL CONTEXT

Le Cateau Community Primary School is a large, local authority-maintained school of about 450 children, with its own nursery, located in the heart of Catterick Garrison, North Yorkshire. Approximately 70% of the school's pupils are members of Armed Forces families and the school prides itself on its diversity, with many pupils from Foreign Commonwealth nations. Nearly all serving parents work in the army and are spread across at least thirteen different units including infantry battalions, medics, engineers and military police. Catterick Garrison, has a population of over 13,000 which is growing; it is the largest British Army garrisons in the world covering more than ten square kilometres, and home to one of the largest Infantry Training Centres in the UK. Responsibilities for ensuring provision is strong for Armed Forces families is delegated across the staff team, with one of the Deputy Headteachers having a strategic oversight.

https://www.lecateauprimary.co.uk/

This case study describes how school leaders, including governors, ensure that provision is informed by listening to what Service children say, as many have attended multiple schools and so are the experts in what works well. Celebrating children's identities and their many cultural differences is a strength of the school's offer: 'Positive relationships, respect and teamwork touch every part of this school and its community. Pupils are happy...They understand that their school is quite unique. The majority of pupils come from military families. The huge range of national flags in the school entrance celebrates the diversity within the school. Many pupils speak languages other than English.' (Inspection report, September 2022)



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

- Armed Forces children are very well represented on the School Council and across the range of pupil ambassador groups the school appoints each year. These include Head Pupils and Class, Lunchtime, Digital, Eco, Safety and Play and Wellbeing Ambassadors, all of which have clear role descriptions and link staff members.
- In September 2021, a Service Children's Community Choir was formed by a staff member with children from schools across the Garrison and local area. Its aim is to support the mental health and well-being of Service pupils through music and to develop community links further. As well as meeting weekly and performing at local events, in 2022, 33 members appeared on *Britain's Got Talent*, reaching the semi-final live show.
- The school offers a Nepali Club for children from Gurkha families, as this is a significant minority group.
- Service children from Le Cateau **always** attend any countywide events, such as an annual Service of Remembrance at Ripon Cathedral each November, and an Armed Forces week celebration run by the army each June. Representative pupils also attended *The Big Conversation* at County Hall in December 2023, taking part in a series of workshops facilitated by North Yorkshire Youth Voice aimed at gathering the views of Service children from across the county.
- A history project, 'Magical Story of Catterick Garrison', is ongoing involving some war veterans looking at the local cultural heritage. Children will develop one of the display boards for a local heritage trail.

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Children's voices are heard regularly through class discussions, assemblies and during the Service Children's Community Choir's rehearsals and all staff endeavour to follow the interests of the children in their classes when planning work. Some interventions are held in the school's dedicated pastoral rooms, *The Retreat*, with some pupils asking to access this when they feel they need some additional support.
- Deployment posters that are displayed in each class help staff know when a child may be missing a parent, so that a tailored, pastoral offer can be provided. Children contribute to these as well as staff.
- Service children shape the school's offer. For example, the School Council recently decided to support local charities and beneficiaries rather than national events like Children in Need. Pupil voice has also led to staff running a Fijian Day, which led to stronger community engagement, and rather than Nepalese children just performing cultural dances, they now teach them to others, bringing in Nepalese families.

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- In its last inspection, Ofsted inspectors noted that children feel both positive and safe at Le Cateau Primary. They know they come from a unique and diverse community, and that their identities are overtly celebrated. This can be seen the moment a visitor enters the school, through the substantial number of national flags in the entrance lobby celebrating the diversity amongst the pupil population.
- A Nepalese-speaking learning assistant is employed to support the many Ghurkha families, ensuring that their voices are heard and acted on. **A welcome video** on the school's website, aimed at incoming families, features the voices of children themselves.
- On moving to the school from another, a pupil passport called 'On the Move' is completed for each child to inform staff of their views, needs and interests.
- Emotional 'check-ins' run across the school first thing each morning and straight after lunch, informing the pastoral team of any tailored support pupils might need to get in the right state of mind for learning. Pupils value these 'mood checks' partly due to their discreet nature. All pupils have a wellbeing journal, aligned to a teaching programme, which children know they can share with staff if they want.

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The school's former Service Children's Champion established a well-attended lunchtime club called *Happy Club* at the request of pupils who said they wanted a place and time to relax and talk about loved ones working away from home. This is now evolving into a 'drop-in' offer.
- The Service Children's Community Choir is now open to **all** children, not just those from Armed Forces families, as feedback indicated that they wanted their civilian friends to join in if they wanted. Similarly, events planned for Service children locally include the opportunities to bring along civilian friends,
- A Service Children's 'charter' has been developed by the lead staff member based on good practice of what works and feedback from some of the school's Armed Forces children.
- An NHS-backed mental health programme **- myHappymind** is currently running at the school. It was introduced through direct feedback from children who wanted a more proactive approach to wellbeing.
- Having many senior leaders and pastoral staff 'at the gate' at drop-off every morning provides a nurturing start to each day. It leads to many issues being 'nipped in the bud' by taking actions early following feedback. Parents value the approachability of leaders and the school's effective communication.

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

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- A wide range of methods are used to monitor and then communicate actions school leaders have taken in response to Service children voice. These include reports to Governors, feedback at staff meetings, senior leaders participating in a termly LA *Service Children's Network* meetings, parental communication channels such as the school's social media. Senior leaders always oversee whole school events.
- Weekly 'Keeping in Touch' parental **newsletters** include a wellbeing section to keep everyone up to date.

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

We pride ourselves on our school motto of '*Equally Important, Equally Different*', and strive to live up to this by listening and acting on the voices of all our children. Knowing and understanding our community is key. We are constantly evolving our offer to meet the unique needs of our learners. A fundamental part of this is involves us putting children and their families are at the heart of decision making.

Fundamentally, our high expectations of and for our children includes providing regular forums for self-expression. By heavily investing in our children's personal growth, we foster their growing resilience and high aspirations for the future.

(Deputy Head)