

Lincolnshire's Festival of Friends



A schools' project to support Service children

Autumn 2023 – Summer 2024

Funded by the Armed Forces Education Trust



LINC^HIGHER



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Introduction

The Festival of Friends is a tried and tested, year-long school improvement project which has run successfully in the following geographical areas, each time with invaluable University support and with a growing number of schools involved:

- Hampshire - in partnership with the University of Winchester (2017-18)
- North Yorkshire and York – in partnership with Inspiring Choices Uni Connect, based at York St John University (2019-2021)
- Oxfordshire – in partnership with Study Higher Uni Connect, based at Oxford Brookes University (2022-23)

The Uni Connect programme was set up in 2017 and supports the strategic goal that students' access to higher education is not limited by their background, location or characteristics. Since children of Armed Forces families ('Service children') are recognised as an underrepresented group in higher education, some Uni Connect programmes target some of their activities to this group of potentially vulnerable young people.

I am again indebted to the trustees of the Armed Forces Education Trust, as without its generous grant, this project wouldn't have been possible.

Thankyou as well to Lincolnshire County Council, and in particular:

- Michelle Dewland, Education Locality Lead, for helping with school recruitment
- Martin Smith, Deputy Director of Children's Services (Education), for speaking at the celebration event

I am extremely grateful to the LiNCHigher Uni Connect team, and in particular:

- John Herbert (Project Manager)
- Shaun O'Neill (Community Projects Manager) and
- Jess McNeill (Community Events and Projects Officer)

all of whom have given their time and energy so willingly throughout the year, committing some of their funding to the project, and providing such a great venue space for the project's celebration event in June 2024 at Bishop Grosseteste University.

Matt Blyton
Independent Education Adviser
Festival of Friends Project Lead



Overview and Aims

The Festival of Friends is a collaborative programme for supporting Service children. Its key aims are to develop, and then share, good practice in the educational and pastoral support for this group of children. It also aims to promote Service children's progression to further and higher education, thereby improving opportunities and ultimately outcomes.

The project provided opportunities for building links between participating schools to support one another, the sharing of good practice and disseminating professional development across staff teams. It was designed to be of particular benefit to schools that have small numbers of Service children on their rolls, as is the situation involving the majority of the 4495 children (at the time of writing) that attract Service Pupil Premium that attend schools across Lincolnshire. A key element of the project was a requirement for participating schools to use the evidence-based Thriving Lives Toolkit created by the Service Children's Progression (SCiP) Alliance.

The collaborative activity involved in the Festival of Friends promoted the identity of Service children amongst their non-Service peers, raising their profile by celebrating their lived experiences. The project brought together key stakeholders to support Service children's educational progression and strengthen their integration with their civilian peers, by raising the awareness of their distinctive needs with all.

"The Local Authority was delighted with how the project was led by Matt Blyton and supported by LiNCHigher. It was a privilege to be involved in it. The Education Team and colleagues working in schools have witnessed the direct impact of the project in terms of improving outcomes for Forces children and young people (in their widest sense) and the impact on early KS2 data"
- Michelle Dewland, Education Locality Lead, Lincolnshire County Council



Project organisation:

Initially, 39 project schools signed up to the project and were allocated to one of three groups ('Hubs'), each based on a geographical area aligned to the county's main military establishments. Each of these hubs or networks was led by a staff member from schools that have recognised good practice in their Service children provision: middle or senior leaders who kindly agreed to support the project, working alongside the Project Lead:

- RAF Coningsby Hub - led by Coningsby St Michael's CE Primary
- RAF Waddington Hub - led by Waddington All Saints Academy (primary) & Sir Robert Pattinson Academy (secondary)
- RAF Cranwell / Prince William Barracks at Grantham Hub - led by Cranwell Primary & Ancaster CE Primary

The five Hub Leaders met four times across the year with their participating 'spoke' project schools, supporting these schools' nominated Service Children's Champions. School 'champions' ranged from headteachers to welfare support staff, depending on individual schools' circumstances. Supply cover was provided to the Hub schools to support some of the work undertaken by their Hub Leads (whose schools were also project schools).

The Hub Leads met for four half-days during the year with the Project Lead, a school improvement adviser, to receive training and guidance. Following these sessions, the Hub Leads then ran their own network meetings to cascade professional development and to help their school-based Champions develop improvement projects that would strengthen their schools' Service children provision. These improvement projects were linked to at least one of the seven principles of effective support described in the SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit.

The project culminated in a celebration event involving staff and children held at Bishop Grosseteste University in June 2024, showcasing achievements across the year whilst also giving the children some fun activities, including a campus tour, to take part in. This was attended by 27 schools and received extremely positive feedback from schools.



All Saints Primary School North Hykeham



Title of project	Engaging parents and supporting Service Superstars during deployments	
School context	Number on roll	252
	% of Service children	12.7%
	How many classes	7 classes + Nursery
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington
	Distance to military base	2.6 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes - 1
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes - 6
Why the school agreed to take part	We have had our Service Superstar group for many years but being part of the Festival of Friends has given the group even more of a purpose and focus. We have been able to look into what we do within school and develop our provision as the number of Service children grows.	

Project Overview

Our aim is to improve the provision for Service children and their families in school. Run by our Learning Mentor, the Service Superstar club had a focus on supporting the wellbeing of children during deployment. We involved parents in activities to provide networking opportunities. Additionally, developing our Service Superstar badges enabled the children to have ownership of their club and be recognised around school.

Main Project Objective

To improve communication and relationship between our Service parents and school and better support children during deployment/training.

Intended outcomes of the project

The communication between parents and school will improve. This will be seen through more parents attending in-school activities, greater support with activities/challenges and information around deployments being sent via our information form and email.

Regular sessions with the Learning Mentor will allow Service children to feel included and important, giving them a greater sense of belonging and opportunities to talk about their experience with other children who have also experienced deployment.

Service children will feel better supported by the whole school through holding whole school events.

Description of what you did

Using the information children have shared from their experiences while a parent is deployed, we have created a deployment diary. This was first shared with staff members who have military spouses to include things they have used with their own children and then sent home with a family to trial. The deployment diary is tailored for each year group and depending on the length of deployment.

The children voiced that they would like to have badges to show that they are Service children. These were designed by the children and production costs fundraised through a variety of activities. It was decided by the Service Superstars that the staff with military spouses should also wear a badge.

To involve the families, we held a tea afternoon as part of our Purple Day celebrations and celebrated Armed Forces Day with the families as well.

*"From a personal perspective, I think that the SSS classes are brilliant for our young people. **** actually, came home after one of them telling us that Daddy has one of the most important jobs in the world!"*
(Year 2 parent)

Details of any funding costs

A large percentage of SPP funding has been used for the Learning Mentor's salary. Costs have also included the collation of deployment packs, resources for community links and forging relationships with military families. £180 was raised by the Service Superstars to pay for the design and manufacturing of their badges.

In the future, we have plans to buy a teddy mascot and improve our deployment packs which will require some funding.



What has been the impact?

Service children have expressed their excitement and enthusiasm with the whole school activities. They have enjoyed being part of the planning and running process of things such as Purple Day and are looking forward to more events in the future.

As new Service children have joined the school, they have been welcomed to Service Superstars and been looked after around school by fellow Service children. This has helped them feel settled and included.

Having parents more involved in school events has allowed them to meet each other - some of our parents had no idea people they knew through work also had children at our school. They have been able to talk to each other about experiences they have had and form friendships and support networks for out of school.

Next steps

To introduce a mascot to our Service Superstar club and make a diary of shared news. This is something the KS1 children have expressed interest in.

We will be continuing to support families through activities in school and by providing our deployment diary to children, as requested, during deployments. This will be edited and improved regularly as the families provide feedback.



"I feel like I belong here because my friends make me happy and cheer me up when I am sad."
(Year 4 girl)

"The best thing about Service Superstars is the support and not being alone."
(Year 5 girl)

Ancaster Church of England Primary School



Title of project		Raise awareness of our Service families within our school community	
School context	Number on roll	197	
	% of Service children	31 (16%)	
	How many classes	Reception – Year 6 (single form entry)	
	Main military base served	RAF Cranwell	
	Distance to military base	4.1 miles	
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes	
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes	
	Service Spouses:	– 2x currently serving in the Army – 1x currently serving in the Navy – 1x ex-Army – 2x ex-RAF	
Why the school agreed to take part	We felt that our Service children and their families were not widely represented enough. We wanted their voices to be heard better and for them to feel more valued, supported and recognised within our school community.		

Project Overview

A Forces Family Club and team building days will help Service children connect, build friendships and participate in a range of meaningful activities. Our Enrichment Day will raise awareness in our school community about military life, teaching non-military children about the experiences and challenges military families face.

Main Project Objective

Create a network of support for military children and raise awareness of Service children's lived experiences among pupils and staff.



"We are thrilled to see Service children's lives being celebrated more. I have noticed a significant difference in my child since attending the club and PGL day where they are able to build relationships and discuss military child life with like-minded children."

(Parent)

Intended outcomes of the project

- Service children will feel better heard and valued within our school community.
- Pupils and staff will better understand the lives of Service children and how best to support them.
- Service pupils will be able to identify other Service children in school and will be provided with opportunities to develop supportive relationships with these children.

Description of what you did

Initially, we introduced a 'Forces Families Club' after school club for all Key Stage 2 Service children. To expand the number of children that could attend the club, we moved it to a lunch time, making it more accessible. This enabled us to triple the number of club members. The goal of our Forces Families Club is to provide a supportive and engaging environment for Service children to connect, develop friendships and participate in a range of meaningful activities.

In April, we held a Month of the Military Child Enrichment Day where all school members wore a touch of purple to celebrate the lives of our Service children. All classes in school immersed themselves in a range of activities relating to the lives of military children, including what the flower of the military child is and why. On this day, we also had a production from An Invisible Man theatre company called 'Wherever Home Is'. This fantastic production followed the story of two military children and what life was like for them and what 'home' meant.

This Enrichment Day helped non-military children understand the challenges and rewards of military life, raising awareness of Service families within our school.

We offered opportunities for Service children to build strong, supportive relationships and have fun together through a range of team building activities outside of school at PGL.

A display board has been created in school so our military children are celebrated. As part of the Forces Families Club, children create different crafts that can be used for our board. We have a map of the world where children have lived.

We have also introduced a 'Service Families' tab on our new school website. This provides current, and new, Service families with a variety of information about where they can gain extra support and has a link to our new deployment notification form.

"I love popping along to the club and chatting to my friends. I felt so proud to be a military child when we held our military child Enrichment Day."

(KS2 pupil)

Details of any funding costs

The only cost so far has been the 'Wherever Home Is' Production performed by An Invisible Man production company.



What has been the impact?

Children have developed a support network and have been able to build relationships with other Service children within our school community.

Service children feel supported, listened to and respected by both pupils and staff.

Service children have discovered who else within our school community is also a military child.

Civilian children have a better understanding of the unusual, and sometimes challenging, lifestyles of some of their peers.

Next steps

- Continue the Forces Families Club, introducing it to Key Stage 1 children.
- Gain parent feedback and provide a support network for military parents/spouses.
- Continue to host an Enrichment Day each April celebrating the lives of military children.
- Provide training sessions to school staff to raise awareness of military children's lives and how to effectively support them.

Banovallum School



Title of project	Banovallum Forces Champions	
School context	Number on roll	607
	% of Service children	8.4%
	How many classes	Years 7-11 (6 forms per year)
	Main military base served	RAF Coningsby
	Distance to military base	9 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	No
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes - x3
	Any other relevant information	Two RAF veterans, and five teachers who were themselves military children, are staff members.
Why the school agreed to take part	Locally there has been an increase in mobility of Service families, including more solo detachments for parents. By forming Banovallum Forces Champions, we aimed to create a bespoke support network for our Service students that involved the whole school community.	

Project Overview

Banovallum Forces Champions will help to form a support network bridging the gap between school and Service families. We want to educate staff, governors and pupils in better meeting the students' individual support requirements. This would be delivered through a series of assemblies, staff training and increased communication via our Forces Champion lead.

Main Project Objective

Raise the profile of Service children's lived experience amongst staff and pupils.

Improve opportunities that ensure Service children receive effective pastoral support when a serving parent is away.

Improve communication between Service parents and school staff.

Intended outcomes of the project

Increase the profile of military children within the school setting by forming Banovallum Forces Champions.

Share experiences amongst the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) students and educate others on the unique and challenging way of life many live.

Provide a support network of staff and peers (particularly during separation).

'I was so proud to stand on parade with my dad, we both held lanterns and my dad got to show his medals.'
(12-year old boy)



'I've never shared my experience with anyone before. After our assembly lots of staff said they admired me for being so brave when my dad's away for so long. They said they had no idea that I had to deal with all that.'
(14-year old girl)

Description of what you did

We invited all Service children to join the Banovallum Forces Champions group and met on a termly basis. During the meetings, we shared our own stories of Service life which enabled us to see that each of our military experiences have been very different. We used this time to disseminate information (including the Hive bulletin) about the services available to the students including clubs, deployment trips and charity events. We also discussed places to seek support, both in and out of school, should they ever need it. Crucially, this enabled students with more experience of separation to advise and support those who had not been away from a parent before. All members proudly wear a badge to help new students identify other Forces Champions within school.

Students made a Forces Champions notice board. The board offers advice on separation, events run from our local station, military news and offers a space to share and celebrate students' achievements.

Several of the students shared their experiences of Service life with the whole school through an assembly celebrating the Month of the Military Child. They proudly shared their experiences which brought many of the staff to tears.

We further raised the profile of our Service students by indicating them as SPP on our class seating plan system.

The Forces Champions lead monitored Service children's behaviour particularly during times of separation. Weekly communication was established via a specific section of the school staff bulletin. This included notifying staff of deployments.

Communication channels were opened by setting up a Forces group on our ePraise system to enable us to contact groups of parents quickly. Forces families were invited to join local events such as some D-Day celebrations, with several students proudly standing by their parents for the first time as part of a parade.

Service families were also invited to the Duke of Edinburgh launch, with several students choosing to complete the bronze award.

Details of any funding costs

Our SPP fund has allowed the Banovallum Forces lead to have an hour of non-contact time a week. This time is earmarked for Forces Champion meetings, welfare checks and communicating with families.

It has also enabled a child psychologist to assess a student urgently, provided refreshments for meetings and some travel to Forces events.

What has been the impact?

By raising the profile of Service students, staff can better monitor the wellbeing of the students, track their progress and implement swifter intervention. Staff are more aware of the challenges facing these students and are better placed to support them.

Forces Champions meetings have helped to promote a bond between the Service children within school and the local military community, using shared experiences to support one another. This has encouraged more open conversations from those needing support. There has been an increased uptake of children using the facilities provided by our local station, such as residential trips run by Forces charities, family deployment trips and even increased use of the Coningsby cinema (all of which were advertised on the Forces Champions notice board). More children have chosen to complete their DoF award this year.

Next steps

Prior to admission, the school wants to establish contact with all Armed Forces families to discuss strategies and provide guidance to facilitate smoother transition.

We hope to construct a welcome package that helps students to quickly evaluate missed course content, particularly for GCSE subjects.



Branston Community Academy



Title of project		Using Pupil Voice to Guide Changes to our Services Provision	
School context	Number on roll	1235	
	% of Service children	8.7%	
	How many classes	About 50	
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington	
	Distance to military base	6 miles	
	Are any military member on GB?	Not sure	
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes - x3	
	Any other relevant information	We are including the staff with military spouses and connections in our military community	
Why the school agreed to take part	<p>The school had decided to change the way we supported our students from Service families. RAF Waddington outreach and current training had advised us that the academic focus we had been using may not be the best way to support our students from military families.</p> <p>This project came to the attention of our headteacher. She thought getting involved would be a great opportunity for the school and our Service students. We felt that getting involved in the project would help us to develop the support we offer through engaging with current research, making closer links with other schools and sharing good practice expertise and ideas.</p>		

'It really made me think about what I want to do in the future and how to get there.'
(Year 9 following a Creative Forces trip)

*'Thank you so much for being there for me through all my tough times and getting Mrs *** involved.'*
(Year 7 student)

Project Overview

Using pupil voice to inform practice (starting with a steering committee of Service student representatives) to find out how they feel, we could improve or change Service support. Their ideas were made into pupil and parent questionnaires to gather the voices of all Service students before putting ideas into practice.

Intended outcomes of the project

- Celebration of the Service community within the school.
- Service students being able to identify and support each other and to access adult wellbeing support when needed (e.g. during parental deployment).
- A greater acknowledgement of the benefits that the Service students bring to the school and the contributions they make.
- Service students (and their parents) being able to access information about the support provided at BCA and identify external support groups, clubs and extra-curricular opportunities available to them.

Description of what you did

We set up and ran:

- A Services steering group made up of two student representatives from each year group, meeting termly. After the initial meetings, we discussed possible changes to provision with the suggested changes put into a questionnaire for students and parents (for the most popular to be implemented).
- A weekly Service club – which we re-branded as a Service drop-in.
- Two Service Breakfast opportunities with the Student Support Team per year group, to help build a community but also to allow students to access mentoring, if needed, and to ensure we have a check-in with all Service students at least twice a year.
- Two Google Classroom groups for lower school and upper school Service students: used for announcements and opportunities etc. This allows easy communication to and between our Service student community.
- A yearly Service trip – to be expanded next year to invite families to join us.
- A Service families email address so Services families and students can easily communicate with the school's student support team .
- A Forces Assembly (led by the Service students) presented to the rest of the school. This raised awareness of the life of Service students, the difficulties and benefits this brings and what it is like to be a Service student at Branston Community Academy.
- Service Ambassadors, identified to provide peer support to other Service students and to represent their peers.
- A display board for Service students – communication, opportunities and support in school and extra-curricular and external opportunities.
- Opportunities for our Service students to participate in, such as those provided by the Annington Trust (Outward Bound), LiNCHigher and Bishop Grosseteste University (Creative Forces Day).

What has been the impact?

- A stronger Service community within the school now exists, where our students are able to support each other and access one-to-one or group support when they need it.
- Our Service students have felt included and listened to in the changes made to our provision at BCA.
- A raising of the profile of the Armed Forces, Service children and the contributions they make to our school community. The benefits of having Service students in our school are celebrated.
- Greater staff awareness of Service students, their challenges, benefits and the support and enrichment on offer for them in school is promoted.
- Staff with links to the Armed Forces are identified and included in our support for the Service community, accompanying them on the yearly trip and in the running of the Services drop-in, Service student breakfasts and Steering Group, making the most of their experiences, contacts and awareness of external opportunities.

Next steps

- Expand our ambassador scheme to include ambassadors in each year group.
- Representatives to our steering group voted for by their peers and required to feedback to their peers on Google Classroom – to include fundraising for Armed Forces charities.
- Opportunities to include pupil voice expanded for all new initiatives (using online questionnaires and Service student breakfast group's focussed discussions).
- Making the most of all opportunities on offer for our Service students with a Service Champion promoting these within the school.



Details of any funding costs

Trip costs to Festival of Friends celebration event and university Creative Forces day (staff cover and transport).

Catering Costs for Services Breakfast.

Games and wellbeing resources for our Services drop-in.

Some small staff costs.

'The deployment journal you gave me Miss, is really good. I'm filling it in and sharing it with Dad.' (who has been recently deployed)
(Year 7 student)

'When's the next Services breakfast? I can't wait.'
(Year 10 student)



Branston Church of England Infant Academy



Title of project		Little Troopers are a celebration!	
School context	Number on roll	134	
	% of Service children	8.9%	
	How many classes	5 (2x Reception. 1x Year One. 1x mixed Y1/Y2 and 1x Year Two)	
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington and RAF Coningsby	
	Distance to military base	5.1 miles to RAF Waddington 19.6 miles to RAF Coningsby	
	Are any military member on GB?	No	
	Are any staff Service spouses?	No	
	Any other relevant information	Our Little Troopers lead is from a Forces Family (RAF) so has experienced the same / similar as the Forces children at Branston Infants.	
Why the school agreed to take part	Branston Infants understands the unique lifestyle children from Forces Families live, but we wanted to raise their profile within school and celebrate their exciting lifestyle more.		

Project Overview

Little Troopers aims to ensure the Service children and their families in our school are celebrated. We provided exciting activities, relating to the military and our school's ethos for reading for pleasure. We wanted to provide a safe and stimulating club where these children's experiences and adventures are celebrated amongst the whole school.

Main Project Objective

Raise the profile of Service children's lived experience amongst staff and pupils.

Improve opportunities that ensure Service children receive effective pastoral support when a serving parent is away.

Improve communication between Service parents and school staff.

Intended outcomes of the project

- Military children feeling that they can share their unique lifestyle, proudly and freely.
- Creating a supportive base for the children to share their emotions and common interests.
- Military children whose emotional well-being may be affected through deployments/relocation better supported through staff awareness.
- Every staff member and pupil gaining an increased awareness of the Service children within school.
- Service children being given a greater identity in school, in line with other school clubs and roles (e.g. wearing pin badges proudly).
- Providing celebration at school for all Service children.

'Little Troopers has been really valuable for our daughter, providing a supportive group which understands the unique challenges of military life, especially moving homes and parental absence. It has been wonderful for her to have this community of Military children to share their experience and know she is part of a larger and wider military family.'

(Parent of a Year 2 Little Trooper)

Description of what you did

- We already had an established Little Troopers group at Branston Infants. A new leader, with experiences of living within the RAF and being raised as a Forces child, was appointed to lead this.
- Our Little Troopers club started again, fortnightly, and the children from Military families met at lunch times to take part in activities and eat lunch together.
- The children took part in:
 - Arts and crafts: making aeroplanes and 'welcome home' banners for their deployed parents.
 - We joined the Reading Force charity (www.readingforce.org.uk/) and gifted the children a free book alongside their Reading Force scrapbooks. We provided information to parents about reading for pleasure during times of deployments.
- During the Month of the Military Child (MotMC) we celebrated our Service children at Branston Infants by gathering information about their Forces parents and presented this to the whole school. This is now displayed within the reading area.
- We had a Reading Spotlight wall, where we displayed stories relating to military life. After the MotMC, we set up a quiet space for the children to share these stories with their friends and staff.
- We joined forces with the RAF Association and held a 'Name a Bear' competition for all members of the school - the prize was a Red Arrows bear gifted from the RAF Association.

Details of any funding costs

- We funded staff time to support Little Troopers and some ELSA time for any children in need.
- We provided Little Trooper pin badges for all children in the group.
- We purchased 'spotlight' books for our reading wall during the Month of the Military Child.



What has been the impact?

- The Service children at school have enjoyed attending Little Troopers club.
- Every member of Branston Infants is aware of the exciting lifestyle and role of the Service children we have attending school.
- Staff are aware of any deployments, whether that be for several weeks or months. They are also aware of any relocations of our military families.
- The Service children in our school have a greater sense of belonging and visibility especially at times of relocation and deployments.
- All Service children are celebrated - that was the main aim.

Next steps

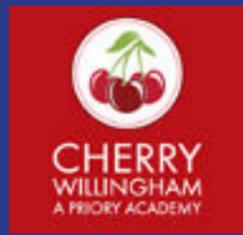
- We would really like to try and secure funding for the next academic year and provide a trip for Service children and possibly their families.
- Invite any new starters at school into the group.



'It's fun. I like looking at pictures of the Trooper teacher's Daddy in the RAF. I show pictures of my Daddy's planes on the board. We learn about everyone's Daddies and Mummies in the Forces.'

(Reception child)

Cherry Willingham Primary Academy



Title of project	Military Monkeys Inc.	
School context	Number on roll	209
	% of Service children	2% - 1 in Year 4, 1 in Year 5, 2 in Year 6
	How many classes	One form entry primary
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington (nearest) Some parents also at RAF High Wycombe and Bovington Camp
	Distance to military base	7.6 miles to RAF Waddington
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes - 2 serving members of the RAF, one of whom is a parent
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes - 1 TA is RAF spouse and a parent
	Any other relevant information	Service Child Champion is an ex-service spouse and has a son in the RAF. 1 other staff member is an ex-service spouse, another staff member is ex-service, 3 staff members were Service children.
Why the school agreed to take part	In 2016 we started Military Monkeys, which is an informal club for our Service children. At that time we had 12 Service children and we worked with them to devise what they would like the club to be like / offer and they chose the name. However, we had noticed that as the number of Service children has decreased over time, their opportunities for sharing experiences and meeting other children with the same life experiences had diminished. As two of our Service children are in Year 6 from the end of this academic year, the children would have very limited exposure to other Service Children. We wanted to address this.	

Project Overview

To improve the opportunities to meet with, and share experiences / forge new relationships with, other Service children within the local community by extending our Military Monkeys club so that Service children at our local secondary school, Pembroke Academy, could join us for regular planned sessions and events across the academic year.

Main Project Objective

To create further opportunities for Service children to meet and explore experiences together.

To increase the level of help for Service children to build new, and maintain existing, relationships.

To help Service families to build strong relationships with each other and with the school community.

Intended outcomes of the project

For the children to have a wider network of friends who are also Service children and have shared experiences together. These shared experiences will offer the children time together with peers who have the same, or at least very similar, life experiences. Their friendships will offer valuable support networks, where they can express themselves safely with others who understand and need no explanations. The opportunity for working across primary and secondary ages means that the younger children will have mentors who can offer support, advice and guidance of how they felt and managed similar experiences.



Description of what you did

Once we decided on the premise of our project, we approached Pembroke Academy who immediately saw the benefits to the children and were keen to join us. We decided to meet for 6 sessions across the year, one during each half term, being held at both sites as well as external trips. In addition to these sessions, we would also invite Pembroke to be part of our annual Remembrance assembly and to an Armed Forces Day BBQ. For this year, we aimed to meet for 2 sessions, along with the Armed Forces Day BBQ and the Festival of Friends celebration event in June 2024.

We initially met with the primary and secondary children separately discussing what they felt they might gain from the project. The primary children decided they would like to know about the older children's experiences and wrote several questions for them, which were sent to the secondary school, prior to the first joint session.

At this first joint session, the children asked their questions, and over drinks and snacks they began to share experiences and compare their similarities. The children very quickly opened up, sharing stories of experiences that most of their other friends at school have not had. Afterwards they played on the adventure playground together. We wanted them to have time together, for the relationships between them to start to grow, so they would feel comfortable in each other's company. This session was very successful and the children all expressed their enjoyment at spending the time together.

At the second session, the primary children went up to the secondary school for an afternoon of baking. The younger children were very excited about their 'trip' and were thoroughly engaged throughout. The older children had the opportunity to guide them through the recipes and support the younger children with the task, all the while chatting together informally and building friendships. Everyone enjoyed the session, especially eating the fruits of their labours and taking some home for their families to enjoy also.

Our final session this year was the Armed Forces Day BBQ. This was a full morning with the children in mixed teams competing in fun (usually wet and messy) challenges to earn points. The team with the highest points won the Challenge Cup. The morning culminated with a BBQ serving hot dogs and burgers. This has always been a favourite event amongst our Service families with competitive spirit at a high!

Details of any funding costs

Staff cover

Nominal costs for juice, biscuits and ingredients for baking.

"It probably helps me know that there are other people out there are just kind of like me with the same kind of parents. And that we always know that if they have to rejoin or if they are in it and have to get deployed that we know can be quite scary, so we can help people through their tough times."
(Child aged 14)



What has been the impact?

The feedback from all the children has been extremely positive, as has been the feedback from the parents. A lot of the children have expressed that it has been nice to meet children who have experienced the same challenges as they have, and the worries they have about their parents working away, sometime in environments of danger, and that the children just 'get it' and understand how they feel.

Our Year 6 children have expressed how they have less worries about transition as they know people at Pembroke now already and feel more familiar with the actual site, feeling less worried about getting lost.

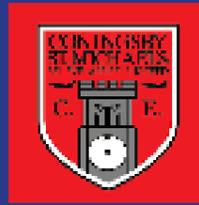
The staff at Pembroke have commented on the natural leadership and mentoring that some of the older children have shown, and the benefits this is offering to the younger children. They have also commented on how one particularly shy pupil has shown a real affinity to nurturing and supporting the younger children, and how this is boosting her self-confidence.

The parents feel the project will be hugely beneficial for the support it offers their children, especially when a parent is absent from home on deployment.

Next steps

We have made contacts within other schools through the project and hope to meet up with them across the next year. We are also considering contacting the two other local primary schools who feed into Pembroke to see if they would be interested in joining Military Monkeys Inc.

Coningsby St Michael's Church of England Primary School



Title of project	Raising the profile of Service families within our school community	
School context	Number on roll	258
	% of Service children	40%
	How many classes	12
	Main military base served	RAF Coningsby
	Distance to military base	5 minute walk
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
	Any other relevant information	We are part of the Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust
Why the school agreed to take part	40% of our school community are Service families as our school located very close to RAF Coningsby. We wanted to ensure that our Service children have the best possible experiences at our school and are supported to be the best they can be. BELIEVE ASPIRE SUCCEED	

'We don't get treated any different from the other children. The teachers know why our lives can change at any time and are there to support us.' (Year 5 pupil)

Project Overview

To raise awareness of our Service pupils and their families within our community. To strengthen our links with RAF Coningsby. To improve our transition procedures and ensure staff are knowledgeable about the Service community – with each child being unique.

Main Project Objectives

- To improve support for Service children and their families currently attending the school and those joining us.
- Raising the profile of the Service community by engagement in enrichment opportunities, for example STEM.
- Improve procedures and provision during periods of deployment.
- Through parental and pupil feedback, updating the school website to improve communication and promote us to Service families.



Description of what you did

Using the SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit, we evaluated our current provision and identified three to four areas for immediate improvement. We led training for a cluster of schools using our experience of using the Toolkit. This cluster has become a strong network that works collaboratively to support Service children in the area. This is now supported by RAF Coningsby's welfare team who have pledged ongoing support.

We celebrated the Month of the Military Child in April 2024 which included an amazing day led by the station's STEM team for the entire school. The children designed their own aircraft, built it, tested and then had to sell it to the Dragon's Den.

The community came together for our Camo Day - children from all communities spent time together sharing their experiences.

Details of any funding costs

Our Service Pupil Premium (SPP) funds our Learning Mentor's salary and she has been the lead for our local network during the project.



We have introduced the Reading Force charity's offer which supports our whole school commitment to the Silver Reading Pledge.

Our school Learning Mentor has established links with an MKC Heroes regional lead, who is currently planning pen pals and activities linking the children to a community in Plymouth.

We have reviewed our website and are improving this, supported by the pupils. Pastoral support for pupils is strong but this has been enhanced by seeking the views of the pupils of what it is like when a parent is deployed. The school display board has been updated.

What has been the impact?

Staff are more aware of the needs of Service families.

Families are engaging more and have fully supported recent events, including Camo Day.

Parents are more aware of our offer and know who to speak to for support.

The profile of our Service children has definitely been raised. The STEM event was thoroughly enjoyed by the children, inspiring them to think about future careers.

Next steps

Our cluster will continue to meet after the life of the project and has applied for funding to support future events and develop learning, with the help and support of RAF Coningsby.

'We wanted to say a huge thank you for the support you have given to us as a family, but also one to one with XXXX. The teddy bear to hug, email to Daddy and the regular check-ins with XXXXX helped us to get through Daddy's deployment. We appreciate you massively and it's such a reassurance that she feels able to speak with you "I'm not shy with Miss Williams!"'

(Parent)

Thank you again for helping us through what was, at times, a very difficult deployment. We really appreciate you.'

(Parent)

Cranwell Primary School (Foundation primary school)



Title of project	Supporting Service Children and their Families	
School context	Number on roll	300 (approximately but quite fluid)
	% of Service children	66%
	How many classes	11
	Main military base served	Royal Air Force Cranwell
	Distance to military base	0.1 mile
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
	Any other relevant information	Cranwell Primary School is adjacent to Royal Air Force (RAF) Cranwell. It has very high mobility due to a large proportion of pupils being from Service families.
Why the school agreed to take part	The school was approached to take part as a Lead Hub School for the 'Festival of Friends' project across Lincolnshire. Two thirds of Cranwell Primary are currently pupils from Service families and therefore many interventions are already embedded to support this cohort of children. By analysing our interventions, our aim was to develop further support strategies for Service children and their families.	

Project Overview

From assessing our provision through the SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit self-evaluation framework, there were 2 main areas that we highlighted to strengthen our work:

- Creating a school website page to further inform parents of support strategies for Service families, sharing information with regard to: SSAFA, Families Federation, funding for military personnel, and deployment forms etc. This website area would also give families a chance to share information with the school about any changes/deployments that were due.
- Creating Transition material for Service pupils and Young Carers to use as they move schools to support transition into the local area.



Main Project Objective

- To improve support for Service Children and their families by sharing relevant resources on the website. To ensure access to early intervention to help families as they move into the local area. To also gain further information from the families so that our school would know which interventions to use when supporting the individual needs of each pupil.
- To further support transitions for Service children and Young Carers as they move across to different school settings, ensuring that their voices are heard. To include important information ready to share with their new schools.



Intended outcomes of the project

- To ensure that the school website shares appropriate information, is clear and easy to navigate for Armed Forces families, and to have information signposted across all military services, including support for Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel.
- As a school with a high proportion of Service families, we understand that moving to a new school can be an anxious time. Our aim is to ensure that children have the tools to settle into their new schools. Our 'All About Me/Transition booklet' ensures that important pupil information is shared accordingly.
- To highlight Young Carers as they move from school to school.

Description of what you did

Our School accessed the Festival of Friends training with the project lead and we completed the Thriving Lives Toolkit self-review materials in the first instance to see which areas of our 'offer' could be developed. From this analysis it was decided to gather more information on the 2 areas chosen.

Time was taken to discuss what would be important to share on the school website. From the Festival of Friends training, it was felt that the emotional cycle of deployment could be an important aspect to share, showing the feelings, common behaviours and practical support to help with the different stages of deployment. It was also important to share relevant information across all three areas of the Armed Forces.

Research was also undertaken on the impact of being a Young Carer within a Forces family. The Children's Society publication, 'Young Carers in Armed Forces Families, Evidencing the Need - September 2017,' concluded that 'Young Carers in Armed Forces Families can face additional challenges due to the impact of multiple and frequent moves and the impact of the serving persons deployment.'

School therefore gained the voice of the Young Carers in school, asking what would be the important information they would like to share as they transferred schools. What would they want the next school to know about them? The pupils created a spidergram of ideas and then an A4 profile was created to include all this information.

Further groups of Service children were then asked what was important to them to share with other schools as they moved on. Most stated that they wanted to share information on what subjects they enjoyed as well as curriculum areas that they had been studying. The pupils wanted to explain what made them happy or sad. A transition booklet was then created to help them share this information. The Young Carers A4 profile was also added to this 'All about me' booklet.

Through analysis of the information, the booklet was amended so that all pupils could benefit from them in the event of moving schools.

In July 2024, the booklet was completed by our Year 6 pupils as a transition tool to support Secondary transfer. A selection of further pupils, transferring out of Cranwell to other schools, were also given the booklet to complete.

Once finished, the pupils were asked to share ideas of how the booklets could be improved over the next academic year.

Details of any funding costs

No further funding was needed as current staff completed the project with the pupils within set school times.

What has been the impact?

The website has been a starting point to develop further links with parents and school, pastoral and SEND staff explaining relevant information from the school website during early transition meetings. The school newsletter has also highlighted the new web page ensuring parents are aware of the useful resources and interventions. The webpage is straightforward to use and has been very helpful to families. Better parental notification of deployments has allowed school to best support children and families via our 'Bluey club' or provide access to further pastoral support, as and when needed. Knowing this information has meant that a tailored approach has been adopted. With this process in place, there is now a clear picture of support for pupils' individual needs.

Pupils feel that they have shared their voice whilst creating the transition booklet and they are pleased with the result. Pupils have felt included and a part of the whole process. They debated different ideas and made the Spidergram together of the final results. The pupils enjoyed sharing the booklets at the Festival of Friends celebration, showcasing their ideas to other schools.

The Young Carer profile ensures that Young Carers are highlighted to their next school at this important time of transition.

Pupils have also started to evaluate the transition booklets and question how they can be adapted as needed.

Next steps

- To continue to add appropriate information to the website from ideas gathered from questionnaires and parent / pupil voice.
- To develop the transition booklet from Year 6 pupils' recommendations and carry out further action research with our Service children and Young Carers about how the information can be adapted over time.
- Continue to work in collaboration with local schools, sharing good practice.

'You have been so proactive and positive, guiding us through this process and without your support it would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible...' (Parent)

Digby the Tedder Primary School



Title of project	Refining and Focusing	
School context	Number on roll	98
	% of Service children	87%
	How many classes	4
	Main military base served	RAF Digby
	Distance to military base	The school is located on the site of RAF Digby
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes 2 member with a serving spouse 7 members (family have served in the forces) 1 member is ex-military
	Any other relevant information	We are part of the Lincoln Anglican Academy Trust
Why the school agreed to take part	With almost 90% of our pupil body consisting of military children, this initiative holds a special place in our hearts and community. Service children face unique challenges and experiences, and it is our honour to recognise their resilience, strength and contributions. This project aims to highlight their stories, celebrate their achievements and provide a platform for their voices to be heard.	

Project Overview

Refining Our Transition Offer: Engaging with each Service family prior to arrival. Care package for the pupil (buddy system, pupil focused meeting with staff).

School Council Initiative: The voice for the pupils, what they believe is important as a Service child and to those who are not Service children.

Dandelion Club: for children whose parents are deployed / working away.



Main Project objectives

Refining Our Transition Offer: We are enhancing our support system for new pupils, ensuring a smooth and welcoming transition for Service children joining our school. This includes personalised welcome packages, peer buddy programs and orientation sessions.

School Council Initiative: Our school council is actively collecting information from Service children to better understand their needs and experiences. This data will help us tailor our support and create a more inclusive environment.

Dandelion Club: We are launching the Dandelion Club, a special support group for pupils whose parents are deployed. This club will provide a safe space for Service children to share their feelings, receive peer support and participate in activities that promote resilience and well-being.

We believe that this project will not only celebrate our Service children but also foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of their unique experiences within our school community.

Description of what you did

Dedicated Website Area: We have introduced a new section on our school website specifically for Service children and their families. This area includes valuable links and resources to support families when moving or arriving, helping them navigate the transition smoothly.

Personal Contact: We have ensured personalised contact for both arriving and departing families. This approach helps us understand their unique needs and provide tailored support to make their transitions as seamless as possible.

Dandelion Club: We have launched the Dandelion Club, a special support group for Service children whose parents are deployed. This club is run by two dedicated staff members who both have serving spouses and have experienced deployments themselves. Their first-hand understanding of the struggles children may experience allows them to provide empathetic and effective support. The Dandelion Club offers a safe space for pupils to share their feelings, receive peer support and participate in activities that promote resilience and wellbeing.

Intended outcomes of the project

To provide a stable and consistent Service Families Support Assistant to the Service children joining and departing the school. Reaching out to the wider family community with support and guidance.

To encourage our Service pupils to establish themselves in a setting full of support and building on their resilience and courage.

'Our child has never settled in a school like she has here at The Tedder and seeing the change in her since we arrived here academically and personally is amazing.'
(Parent)

Details of any funding costs

Seeking funding to support a Service Families Support Assistant.

What has been the impact?

The impact of this project has been profound. Our military children have realised how special they are and have gained a better understanding that the feelings they may experience are natural. This has fostered a sense of pride, belonging and self-awareness among these pupils, helping them to navigate their unique challenges with greater confidence and resilience.

Next steps

To fund a dedicated Service Families Support Assistant. This will provide a longstanding and experienced staff member who has the knowledge and first-hand experience of the military environment.

'We are looking forward to coming home and having our children returning to a setting they already know.'
(Parent)

Heighington Millfield Priory Academy (Primary)



Title of project		Launch of an Introduction Leaflet for Service children	
School context	Number on roll	234	
	% of Service children	9%	
	How many classes	EYFS –Year 6	
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington	
	Distance to military base	6.6 miles	
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes	
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes	
	Any other relevant information	4 ex-military spouse staff. Our HLTA is the Service champion and is one of the above	
Why the school agreed to take part	The school has supported its Service children for 14 years and wanted to assess if it were providing adequately for the children in all areas. The present Service champion is leaving at the end of the year, having run a support group since inception and wanted a record of the group's achievements to date.		

Project Overview

Having worked through the SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit, it became apparent that we did not "sell" what was on offer to the Service children in our school. The current Service children suggested that they could make a booklet to show new Service children the support they have received whilst in school. This could be given on entry to share with families as they arrive.

Intended outcomes of the project

Service children and their families would know they are not alone and that they would have a support system as soon as they arrive. A finished leaflet showcasing the provision and experiences would be available to every Service pupil.

Main Project Objective

Raising awareness of the support / experiences provided for Service children and their families within school.



*"I loved help making the booklet, I wanted to tell people what I had done in Forces group and to show new people joining what a great thing it is to be part of."
(Year 6 child)*

Description of what you did

The children decided they would like to produce a booklet. The older children spoke with the younger pupils in the group about how they are supported in school (e.g. using their Forces Record books that they have built up during their time with us). They then made a plan about what was important for the content.

They produced and wrote all of the contents of the booklet, including designing a logo for the group to be used in the future on the cover of their record books.

The children also used the internet to find and include relevant websites for Service support for children including Reading Force, Little Troopers and the Armed Forces Education Trust.

They also sourced quotes from both children and adults as to the impact of the group on their, or their child's, school experience.

A prototype was produced and will be improved on, ready for the new year's intake in September 2024.

Details of any funding costs

As the production was by the children using school resources, no funding was required for the leaflet.

School gave funding for the transport for the Festival of Friends celebration event in June 2024.

What has been the impact?

The Service children involved were very engaged in showcasing their experiences to incoming children and were proud to share that they were Service children.

As a school, we were content with the provision given but were equally anxious to keep improving what was on offer and to make incoming families more aware of the support given to a very special group of children within our community.

The impact of the leaflet on the new families will be monitored as it is put into use and it will continue to be improved.

Next steps

We are also going to improve our Armed Forces profile on the school website as we realised that we didn't 'sell' our Service child offer and presence well enough - in the hope that we will attract more Service pupils.

The leaflet will be improved and kept relevant .

All new Service families will have a comprehensive knowledge of provision given.

Staff will be trained in the 7 areas of the Thriving Lives Toolkit so they can understand the sometimes unique problems facing Service children.



*"I am very proud of what we have achieved as a group. I feel passionate about the support provided for these children having seen my own girls go through deployment and separation from grandparents and close family. I want to keep improving what we as a school provide as I feel these children are often "forgotten within the school population."
(HLTA and Service Support)*

Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School



Title of project	Raising the profile of Service families within our school community	
School context	Number on roll	86
	% of Service children	34%
	How many classes	4
	Main military base served	RAF Coningsby
	Distance to military base	3 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
	Any other relevant information	We are part of the Lincoln Anglian Academy Trust
Why the school agreed to take part	34% of our school community are Service families and our school is located very close to RAF Coningsby. Our Service pupil mentor is new to the role and involvement in the project provided opportunities to network with other schools.	

Project Overview

Our aim was to ensure that our Service children are well supported and have high aspirations.

To raise awareness of our Service pupils and their families within our community.

To strengthen our links with RAF Coningsby.

To improve our transition procedures and ensure staff are knowledgeable about the Service community – each child being unique.

Main Project objectives

To improve support for Service children and their families currently attending the school and those joining us.

Raising the profile of the Service community by engagement in enrichment opportunities - for example, visits from the Station Commander and visits to RAF Coningsby.

Improved procedures and provision during periods of deployment.

To update the school website to improve communication and promote our Service families in the local community.



“Love MKC Heroes, I always ask if it is on! I love hugging the bears and I like doing crafts and painting with my friends.” (Year 1 pupil)

Intended outcomes of the project

Improved communication with pupils and parents.

Improved links with RAF Coningsby.

Increased number of check-ins with pupils.

Improved transition for pupils moving into school.

Greater awareness by staff of the life of a Service child.

Description of what you did

Using the SCiP Alliance’s Thriving Lives Toolkit, we evaluated our current provision and identified three to four areas for immediate improvement.

We joined training with a cluster of schools led by our partner school, Coningsby St Michael’s (CSM - with whom we share an Executive Headteacher). Being part of this network was an invaluable link for sharing ideas and good progress.

This cluster has become a strong network that works collaboratively to support Service children in the area. This is supported by RAF Coningsby’s welfare team which have pledged ongoing support. We celebrated April’s Month of the Military Child which included a Camo Day and an amazing visit from Group Captain Cooper who spoke to the children about careers in the RAF. Our year five and six children visited RAF Coningsby as part of their history topic, ‘Why was Lincolnshire called Bomber County?’ They learnt about the history of the base, had a tour of Black Jack and even watched the new display of the Spitfires and Typhoons.

We are introducing the charity Reading Force and its offer which supports our whole school commitment to the Silver Reading Pledge.

The Learning Mentor at CSM has established links with a MKC Heroes’ regional lead who is currently planning pen pals and activities linking our children to a community in Plymouth.

We have reviewed our website and are improving this supported by the pupils. Pastoral support for pupils is strong and has been further enhanced by seeking the views of the pupils - what is like when a parent is deployed? The school display board has been updated.

Details of any funding costs

Service Pupil Premium (SPP) funds our Military Kids’ Club and some hours for a Teaching Assistant who has been part of a network for the project.

What has been the impact?

Staff are more aware of the needs of service families.

Families are engaging more and fully supported recent events, including Camo Day.

Parents are more aware of our offer and know who to speak to for support.

The profile of Service children has been raised. The visit by the Group Captain was thoroughly enjoyed by the children inspiring them to think about future careers.

Next steps

The cluster will continue to meet after the project has ended and has applied for funding to support future events, and develop learning, with the help and support of RAF Coningsby.



“My Dad goes away at least once a month, so I’m used to it. Sometimes it’s only for a week, but sometimes it’s much longer. It’s ok when my Dad is away, it just feels a bit different. It also feels strange when he comes back again as I need to get used to it again. If I wanted to talk about it, I’d talk to staff in school, my teacher’s Dad is in the RAF like mine, so I know she understands.” (Year 6 pupil)

Kirkby on Bain Primary School



Title of project		Supporting the wellbeing of Kirkby on Bain's Service children	
School context	Number on roll	118	
	% of Service children	9%	
	How many classes	6 (Reception, Yr1, Yr2, Yr3, Yr4&5, Yr6)	
	Main military base served	RAF Coningsby	
	Distance to military base	4 miles	
	Are any military member on GB?	No	
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes	
	Any other relevant information		
Why the school agreed to take part	To make ties with other local schools and to improve practice within the school to ensure the Service pupil premium is used to best support and celebrate our military pupils.		

Project Overview

We wanted to improve the Service children's after school club and develop a notice board so all school pupils can learn about military life.

We also wanted to design a deployment notification form for Armed Forces' parents to keep staff members up to date with upcoming deployments, and better engage with RAF families to keep them up to date with events.

Main Project Objective

To improve the communication between school and families, especially regarding upcoming deployments.

To make children in school more aware of our Service children to raise their awareness and understanding.

To improve the support our Service children receive in school, especially focussing on their mental health and wellbeing.

So improve practice during the afterschool support group.

Intended outcomes of the project

To become more informed and up to date about deployments using a newly developed notification form so the Service children can be thoroughly supported, with this information shared amongst the staff team.

To show awareness of the school's Service children and celebrate their identity with other pupils, by making a display board in the school hall which can be updated regularly.

To provide an enriched afterschool club for all Service children that gives them the chance to meet, share experiences and worries on a weekly basis.



Description of what you did

We have used the SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit to identify areas which we needed to improve on, which then led to the following:

A display board was made available in the school hall for our Little Troopers group to celebrate these children. They created the letter heading for the board during a club session and were really excited to show off their skills. We put up a map of the world and marked out the most usual places for deployments and now the children can mark on the map where their parent is deployed to, at any given time. We also used the board to display any crafts they have made, and to help the children talk about their feelings with the board displaying the Little Troopers charity's 'x-ray of feeling' sheets.

The nominated 'Service Children's Champion' then designed a deployment notification form which parents can fill in to make us aware of forthcoming deployment dates, give us contact details where, with our support, the child / children can message or email Dad or Mum or even send letters too and let us know of any additional support they may need during the period.

We continued to run our Little Troopers after-school club which is open to all military and veterans' children every week where we craft, cook, play games outside, write to deployed family members and many other things chosen by the children, as we want them to have ownership over the club and do things they enjoy that they may not get time to do at home.

We had a visit from the RAF military police whilst learning about careers. They explained the differences between being in the RAF police and the civilian police to a group of both Service and non-Service pupils at the school.

Details of any funding costs

Travel costs to the Festival of Friends celebration event.

Staff hours to run our afterschool club.

What has been the impact?

Most of our Service Pupil Premium children attend the weekly after school support group Little Troopers.

There has been a large uptake to join the Reading Force scheme.

Non-military children in school have taken an interest in the new notice board which in turn is helping our Service children feel understood and able to celebrate their identity.

Next steps

To develop and improve the school website page regarding our Service Pupil Premium children.

To create a group email for Service Pupil Premium families to keep them up to date with the RAF Coningsby HIVE activities, Little Troopers and in-school information.

To continue developing links with other local schools with Service children on their rolls.



"I like that we can put our work up in the hall and use the map to show people where our dad is when he goes away."
(Year 5 pupil)

"I love coming to Little Troopers."
(Year 1 pupil)

Manor Leas Junior Academy



Title of project	Dandelion Club	
School context	Number on roll	300
	% of Service children	3%
	How many classes	12
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington
	Distance to military base	5.2 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	No
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
	Any other relevant information	4 ex-military spouse staff. Our HLTA is the Service champion and is one of the above
Why the school agreed to take part	We only have a very small number of military children but our School Business Manager is a veteran and is also a Service spouse. As a result, she wanted to ensure that we had provision for our small cohort of Service pupils to recognise and promote their uniqueness and to ensure that tailored support was in place for them.	

Project Overview

The implementation of a club in school for Service Children to attend.

Main project objective

Improving support for our Service pupils and their families. To recognise the impact that service life can have on our pupils

Intended outcomes of the project

To establish a permanent club at school for our Service pupils to attend. This will focus on wellbeing, resilience and promotion of the wonderful work of our Armed Forces.

Description of what you did

We allocated a teacher to be our project lead. We chose Miss Burns as she was a military child herself and, in fact, still is, even though she is now a teacher!

We initially chose to launch our project with our Year 3 pupils (3), and they are the founding members of our club. Their enthusiasm will be used to continue this club moving forward and will help us open it up to the wider school.

Details of any funding costs

At the moment our investment has been in time, although we plan to purchase a number of books that are relevant to our Service children (approximately £100). Longer term, we are hoping to purchase conferencing equipment so children can speak with deployed parents when they are away from home.

What has been the impact?

It has been lovely to see our pupils become more aware of the roles that their parents have, as initial discussions showed that they didn't really understand much about what their parents did.

By involving them in the project, and taking them to the Festival of Friends celebration event, it was clear to see that they realised that actually they are not alone and that there are many children like them who have parents going on deployment.

Next steps

To embed the group into our school life.

To dedicate a fixed notice board within the school.

To order in suitable resources.



'Thank you for providing this wonderful opportunity for our children, they had a great experience.'
(Parent of another Y3 girl)

'I think the Dandelion Club is a fab idea, I only wish schools recognised it when I was a child as I was also a Service child. It gives them that little boost and days like today make them feel so special!'

(Parent of Y3 girl)



Navenby Church of England Primary School



Title of project	Reviewing Service Pupil Premium spending	
School context	Number on roll	196
	% of Service children	13%
	How many classes	7
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington
	Distance to military base	5.5 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	No
	Any other relevant information	
Why the school agreed to take part	We value our Service children and their families and wanted to continue to make a difference; we have been focusing on mental health and wellbeing and supporting our more vulnerable families, and this project gave us the focus to pursue this. It would also provide us contacts in other schools who could share their experiences and expertise to help us provide an even better provision for these children and families.	

What has been the impact?

Confirmation that our approach is relevant, useful and a pertinent use of the additional funding provided for these children.

There were some lovely ideas which were on display at the celebration event in June 2024 and for us, this was the most beneficial part of the project. Whilst we do a lot of things, there were things we saw which we would like to do and these are already in our plans for next year.

Our children certainly felt a sense of worth and pride in their circumstance of being Service children. They grew in confidence at the event, talking to others about what we do here which was nice to see.



Next steps

We will keep in touch with cluster schools with a view to potentially share ideas going forward.

Project Overview

To examine our current use of Service Pupil Premium (SPP) funding and look for any improvements which would benefit of our Service pupils.

Main project objective

To evaluate our current use of SPP spend to ensure we are making best use of it; to compare this with other primary schools in our local area to see if there are any 'gaps' which we could learn from with a view to pooling knowledge and sharing ideas / resources / planning.

Intended outcomes of the project

To critically assess our provision. We have had a variety of features in place for a number of years which we know enhance our Service children's primary education. We wanted to be able to celebrate this in a wider field and ensure that our Pupil Premium spend is effective and beneficial.

To be able to learn from what other schools do and how they spend their Service Pupil Premium. To also give our Service pupils the experience of meeting other Service pupils from different schools to see what their perceptions and experiences are like.

Description of what you did

Following an audit and then the local 'network' meetings with other project schools, which were both very valuable things to do, we were able to analyse our SPP usage within our setting. It was good to see what others did and the plans they had in place - but for us, it was more of an assurance that what we are doing, and have done for a number of years, was perhaps over and above what might be expected.

It was pleasing for us to see the journey we have come on and seeing where other schools starting their journey could get to. We celebrated what we do in school with our Service pupils and the families. We ran another Camo Day with the cadets from the Priory Academy LSST; we attended the flag raising ceremony in Sleaford to mark the start of Armed Forces Day; we welcomed the local (NK) district councillor who came to present our Service children with their certificates and prizes for their winning entries for a competition we entered.

We celebrated our 'Forces Club' in assembly and all the work it has been doing around being a Forces Child and supporting well-being. Our Service pupils led our remembrance day collective worship, wrote poems, shared artwork and honoured the Last Post (which is often played by a parent on the bugle).

We are regularly liaising with our Forces parents to ensure what we provide meets their individual needs. Our Forces Club leader is in regular contact and is a source of comfort for these families when a parent is deployed.



"Our Forces Club has real benefits for these children. They look forward to their weekly meetings where they work on projects with other children who understand their situation. They also appreciate having a designated adult to help them with any specific issues or problems which may arise at other times. Our parents also value the additional support which we have in place for their children." (Sarah Sheardown, Deputy Headteacher)

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School



Title of project	UCOMP (United Children of Military Parents) Club	
School context	Number on roll	161
	% of Service children	5%
	How many classes	7
	Main military base served	RAF Cranwell
	Distance to military base	6 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
	Any other relevant information	
Why the school agreed to take part	The school wanted to take part in the Festival of Friends to address and better understand the needs of Armed Forces families through strengthening relationships with the children and families in school, joining forces with local schools and building relationships with military support services.	

Project Overview

The project was used to set up a military contact within school and to develop a lunchtime club that focused on strengthening and building relationships between Service children in school and the project lead. It would enable the building of friendships between children in different key stages, also allowing for emotional check-ins to assist when Service children's parents were deployed.

Main project objective

The main objective of the project was to understand the needs of our Service children within school, alongside building a rapport with a main staff contact so that the school could become more aware of any deployment of parents and facilitate the emotional support needed for the children at this difficult time. In addition, the creation of a military contact enabled parents to have an additional point of contact in school, for them to discuss any concerns they had in relation to all aspects of school and home life.

Intended outcomes of the project

The intended outcome of the project was to build closer relationships with the Service children and their families so that they all felt more supported, especially at times when one or both parents may be deployed. In turn, these closer relationships with the Service children would allow them to express any worries they may be having that they haven't felt that they could discuss with others previously.

Closing the gap between key stages was an important part of the project because as a small school with few Service children, they may not know who the other Service children are. This introduction during the club would allow them to bond over a shared understanding of what life is like for them.

'I really enjoy coming to the club at lunchtime as I have made new friends and feel supported to talk about how I am feeling as my dad is away.'
(10 year old girl)



Description of what you did

A letter detailing the project was given to parents so that they were aware of what was happening within school and the aims of the project being undertaken. Within this letter, the project lead was named as the contact for military parents should they need to discuss anything.

The project lead personally introduced herself to each of the Service children and explained the purpose of the club to them. As the club was starting from the beginning, the children and the project lead spent some time discussing what the club would be like, how it would work and designing a club name and logo.

The children then spent some time introducing themselves to the group and telling everyone some information about who was in the military in their families and what they did. They even brought in some pictures of their parent in uniform doing their job in the Armed Forces.

The children were keen to try new activities and celebrate the military services that they belonged to. It was decided that the new activities would be art and craft based so that all the children, regardless of age or key stage, could participate - they were keen to promote inclusiveness, as they felt this best represented the military services they belonged to.

The children, along with the project lead, met one lunchtime per week for 15 minutes. This enabled them to do a short activity whilst the project lead completed an emotional check-in with each child. If, during this check-in, a child was very upset or had considerable worries, the project lead would allow some additional time after the session to talk to them.

Several activities were completed such as creating 'hope butterflies' from natural materials such as twigs and leaves; learning morse code; making bookmarks; and colouring activities.

The project lead spoke to several of the parents during the project as they detailed parent deployment dates and concerns they had about their children. The project lead took into consideration what they had stated and, on a one-to-one basis, spoke to the children concerned. This also fed into additional emotional check-ins especially during the first few weeks of parental deployment.

Details of any funding costs

There were no funding costs as all art equipment used was already available within school.

Next steps

Our next steps are to continue to facilitate the club and emotional check-ins one lunchtime a week, and to build upon the contacts made during this project to raise awareness of military services within our school community (so that we can continue to support existing and future Service children in a positive way).

What has been the impact?

The impact of the club, despite only being up and running for a short time at the time of writing, has been positive. Some of the children have had parents deployed over the month of May 2024 and this club has allowed them to share their feelings and worries. These children have been able to support each other with kind words and have checked-in on each other outside of club times. The children's friendship groups have widened - as a result and you often see them not just talking, but playing together at lunch times.

Communication with our Armed Forces parents has strengthened and we have been able to support deployed parents with school communication using our communication platform Class Dojo. This has enabled us to send some pictures of activities and events that the children have been involved in to the deployed parent as they have been set up on the school system and downloaded the App on their electronic devices. The children have enjoyed having their picture taken knowing that their absent parent will see them.

'The club has given my child somewhere to feel included as all children are in the same situation. It has really helped them to feel secure in expressing their feelings.'
(Parent)



Potterhanworth Church of England Primary School



Title of project	A Time to Reflect	
School context	Number on roll	135
	% of Service children	16%
	How many classes	6
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington
	Distance to military base	8 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	No
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
Any other relevant information	The number of Service children within school has dramatically increased over the past few years, with families deciding to settle within ours and neighbouring villages.	
Why the school agreed to take part	To continue to raise the profile and importance of the work we do to support children from military families.	
	To gain support from external bodies and to connect with neighbouring schools to support and inspire future ideas and ways of supporting military children within our school, as best we can.	

What has been the impact?

Talk around the project has brought Service children at our school closer together and developed a further sense of 'family'. They have been keen and open to speak about family member deployments and how it makes them feel. There was excitement about sharing their finished wood-burnt artwork with the rest of the school before they were set in place and that they will act as additional ambassadors for wellbeing within school.

Next steps

Once we have placed the pieces within our outdoor areas we will:

- Monitor impact through pupil voice interviews, carried out by both staff and Service children
- The children will start to develop ways / ideas for how support for them can be improved in the next academic year.



Project Overview

A time to reflect was developed to give children spaces within our outdoor school areas to go to when they are in need of comfort and / or reflection time, especially when parents are away on deployment or 'weekending'.

Main project objective

To continue to improve the pastoral support for Service children within our care, including continuing to raise awareness of Service children's lived experience amongst staff and peers.

Intended outcomes of the project

Offering the children additional opportunities, away from the classroom / structured activities, that they can be supported to use independently to boost their emotional wellbeing.

Understanding amongst peers will be increased - and they too will be supported to use the spaces for comfort and times of reflection.

Description of what you did

Throughout April 2024 (the Month of the Military Child), Service children explored the reason for the dandelion being the symbol of Service children.

Throughout May:

- They met to learn about the Festival of Friends project and discussed ways that artwork can be created to support them and other groups of children within school.
- They sketched out their dandelion markings and made a start on wood-burning the images.

Through June/July, they:

- Completed their wood-burnings and varnished their work.
- Led either a whole school or key stage worship(s) to explain the aims of their project.
- Placed the art pieces within the outdoor environment.
- Supported themselves, and others, in utilising the spaces for emotional support and comfort.

Details of any funding costs

Only £6 for tree stump pieces, as we were able to borrow the wood burning tool.

"The children have spoken very positively about their project and I'm sure it will not only give them additional space and time for reflection, but also support other children in school as well."
(Parent)

"It will be lovely to see our wood-burnt art in the sensory garden for all children in school to use."
(9 yr-old girl)

Queen Elizabeth's High School, Gainsborough (Secondary and 6th Form)



Title of project	Developing our Forces children Community	
School context	Number on roll	1166
	% of Service children	1.28%
	How many classes	42
	Main military base served	No main base as we have students from RAF, Navy and Army families.
	Distance to military base	N/A
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	No, but some are ex-Service spouses
	Any other relevant information	A number of our Service students are 'Ever 6' and most of those whose parents are in active service have stable home experiences
Why the school agreed to take part	This year we have been able to appoint a member of staff with a Forces background herself and a real appetite for supporting this group of children. This meant that when the invite came into school, we had additional capacity and it was good timing for us to step up our support.	

Project Overview

We wanted to generate a Forces children community – attempts to do this in previous years had fallen flat.

Main project objective

Improving support for Service children, making sure they were connected to the school's Service Children's Champion staff member and to each other, providing opportunities previously missed and making sure they had a voice in school.

Intended outcomes of the project

- Regular meetings in place which Service students want to attend.
- Participation in Festival of Friends and also Forces event at Lincoln University, run by LiNCHigher.
- Developing a stronger sense of community for Service children.
- Upskilling staff.

Description of what you did

We have an experienced and dedicated member of staff to support the students and to lead regular meetings. We have created a Google Classroom to enable communication - the students named this and designed a logo for it.

We now have a noticeboard in the centre of school for events and information. Our Service students have written a small piece about their experiences and there are photographs of the trips that they have been on. They have also produced articles for the school newsletter on recent trips.

A welfare note has been added to the school communication system so that all staff are aware of them and provide additional support, as needed.

Some of our Service students have attended a visit to Lincoln University run by LiNCHigher and attended the Festival of Friends celebration at Bishop Grosseteste University in June 2024.

As a school, we have completed the SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit self-evaluation framework to review, and strengthen, our provision.

Details of any funding costs

Travel costs were incurred for the two events.

What has been the impact?

- Students feel heard and better supported.
- Peer mentoring for new Service students is in place.
- Our Services community is building.
- Information sharing about our Service students is more embedded.
- Relationships with Armed Forces parents has strengthened.

Next steps

- Continue regular meetings with our Service students.
- Take part in Remembrance Day services and lay a wreath.
- Attend a flag raising ceremony and have a group lunch for Armed Services Day.
- Allocate peer mentors for new students.
- Identify a serving parent to speak to staff on an INSET day (to be agreed).
- The whole school to wear something purple for a day in April as part of Month of the Military Child.
- Tailored careers support for Service students in Years 10/11.
- Contact a local RAF HIVE.



'All students' experiences are different. It has been good for them to have a person that they can go to for support if needed. I am happy that my daughter will have someone to talk to her about careers.'
(Parent)

'It's gone well this year; I liked the trip I went on and going to the meetings. I like that I am going to mentor a new boy next year and give him a chance to do well.'
(14-year-old boy)

Rauceby Church of England Primary School



Title of project	The launch of the Dandelion Club	
School context	Number on roll	167
	% of Service children	26% (43 children)
	How many classes	7
	Main military base served	Cranwell and Coningsby
	Distance to military base	5.2 miles to Cranwell
		20.7 miles to Coningsby
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
Any other relevant information	4 ex-military spouse staff. Our HLTA is the Service champion and is one of the above	
Why the school agreed to take part	To raise the profile of our Service children within the school and to enhance provision / support of those children.	

Project Overview

To launch a club aimed at our Service children and their families called the Dandelion club. This included a separate email address for parents to contact the school's nominated Service Lead.

Main project objective

To support Armed Forces families before, during and after deployment.

To bring Service families and children together at different times over the year to strengthen their identity and celebrate their lived experience.

Intended outcomes of the project

To establish a permanent club at school for our Service pupils to attend. This will focus on wellbeing, resilience and promotion of the wonderful work of our Armed Forces.



Description of what you did

In Autumn 2023 we launched the Dandelion Club and created a new email correspondence for our Service families. We initially did this to obtain parental views and ideas for different activities throughout the year. The main purpose of the email was to gain a knowledge of when a deployment was due to occur and what support parents would like.

After reviewing what parents / carers said, three events were decided on. The first being around Christmas time - Service children and their families made and decorated our school Christmas tree. The second was a social occasion for Armed Forces families to enjoy an evening together whilst completing STEM challenges and a ploughman's buffet. For our final event, our military parents were invited to join their children at a forest school lunch session. The Service children had been meeting over Summer term 1, once a week, to cook their lunch over the campfire before enjoying time in our Forest School area.

With our new email set up, we had a sound understanding of when our Service families would potentially need our support as a result of deployment. In some cases, families felt they didn't need any extra support whilst some requested weekly check-ins for their children. During deployments, all Service children have had the opportunity to write letters and draw pictures to be sent to Dad whilst he is away.

As part of the project, our Service families were also invited to join our Year Six children in leading our Remembrance Day Service. This also included four of our children visiting the International Bomber Command Centre to lay a school wreath.

Details of any funding costs

Resources for our Christmas tree decorations = £35.00

Food for the social evening = £106.00

Food for our campfire lunches = £100.00

Adult time to support children whilst experiencing a deployment = £120.00

Next steps

To produce a newsletter for parents to showcase the year and ask for feedback and ideas moving forward. What would parents like next year -same events or different?

What has been the impact?

The greatest impact from our project has been the inclusion and participation from our Service families. The overall attendance across our events has been 63% of families attending at least one of these. The profile of our Service children has increased within the school, with teaching staff increasing their knowledge of the Service children not only within their own class, but across the school.

Our Service children have asked for the events and / or forest school lunch to run again next year, explaining they enjoyed being together, especially with children from different year groups.

The attainment achieved across our Service children has remained consistent, with the majority of the children achieving age-related expectations or greater depth, even whilst a deployment has been occurring.

*'Forest club has really helped
***** meet other children whose
parents are away a lot too.'
(Military parent)*

*This is an amazing idea, so the
children don't think they are alone. It's
the first school we've been part of that
have ever done such a thing!
(Military parent who joined our school
this year.)*

Sir Robert Pattinson Academy (secondary)



Title of project	Website, profiles and transition	
School context	Number on roll	1303
	% of Service children	4.6%
	How many classes	Year 7 - 13
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington
	Distance to military base	4.7 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	Yes
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
	Any other relevant information	
Why the school agreed to take part	<p>At Sir Robert Pattinson Academy, we recognise the challenges children from Armed Forces families face and strive to mitigate the negative impact on Service children of family mobility, or parental deployment, through pastoral and academic support.</p> <p>We joined the project to widen our network, facilities and resources offered to our Service Pupil Premium (SPP) students. We have a dedicated Service Tutor who supports our students daily. The SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit allowed us to identify and highlight areas where we could strengthen our provision. The Festival of Friends gave us an opportunity to use time to close those gaps and further improve what we offer. Being a 'hub' school throughout this project also allowed us to build relationships with other local schools and military personnel.</p>	

Project Overview

To create a Service area on our school website and improve our transition programme to support Service students more who join us in September, as well as mid-term.

Main project objective

Improving the support for Service children both on roll and those transitioning into our school.
 Improving opportunities that ensure no child is missed from receiving pastoral support when a Serving parent is away.
 Improving communication between Armed Forces parents and school staff.

Intended outcomes of the project

Improving opportunities that ensure no child is missed from receiving pastoral support when a Serving parent is away, using deployment notification forms.

Improving communication between parents and school staff, through the Service section of our website.

Improving attainment from our Service students, as a result of 1 to 1 or small group tutoring and greater classroom support.

Raising awareness so that all staff and students understand the extra challenges Service students face in and around education.

Facilitating more educational visits for Service students.

Description of what you did

We created a student voice form for all Service students to complete. Here, they had the opportunity to tell us a little more about themselves including their interests and aspirations. They told us how they found their transition into our school, what they liked and didn't like. We then used this information to create an improved transition programme. Our Service Tutor met with every Service student on roll and filled in each student's personal Service profile regarding life at home and what our Service students need us to know and require support with, which was then shared with relevant staff. Our tutor became a point of contact for anything these students needed, both pastorally and academically. Students/parents could also email using our new dedicated Services email address.

We then began to develop a Service section for our school website. This includes our deployment notification form, how to request support and information on the SCiP Alliance's Thriving Lives Toolkit which describes evidence-based good practice in this area.

We now also email out our deployment form, when we are made aware that a parent is to be deployed. This form allows us to monitor and respond appropriately to the level of need a child requires whilst their parent is away. We have taken part in a number of bespoke educational activities including a widening participation Creative Forces event at Bishop Grosseteste University, the offer from the charity Reading Force and a drama production from An Invisible Man theatre company with an Armed Forces background.

One of our Sixth form students presented during the Festival of Friends celebration event ceremony in June 2024. She gave an inspiring speech and spoke about her family, friendships and individual experiences as a Service child and the different emotions she felt growing up.

We are currently building up a transition pack for when children from Service backgrounds join us, as well as a buddy system to support our mid-term starters.

Details of any funding costs

Our SPP budget has been used to fund a dedicated Service Tutor. It has also funded a Service production and transport to and from the Festival of Friends event at Bishop Grosseteste University, as well as other visits.

What has been the impact?

Our students have enjoyed the extra provision put in place for them this year, particularly the educational visits. A greater proportion of our Service students have been involved in these different activities.

We have received positive feedback from both parents and students regarding the support in place for our Service students and the educational visits/events that they have been a part of.

Service students have been more open about how they are feeling, due to having 1 to 1 check-in conversations. Staff have a greater knowledge of the SPP budget and its intended impact.

Parents have a greater awareness of how, as a school, we are supporting their children, both academically and pastorally.

Next steps

We are continuing to build and add to our Service website. We are working on a transition project for when Year 6 children join us in September. We are looking at having a Year 7 form group dedicated to our Service students. We plan on introducing Service buddies, to support those students joining us in year 7 or mid-term starters.

'I've really enjoyed the school trips I've been on with my Service peers this year. We've learnt a lot about each other.'
 (Year 7 student)



'She's very positive about her 1 to 1 check-ins and says she really enjoys them.'
 (Parent)

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School



Title of project	Wellbeing for Service Children	
School context	Number on roll	293
	% of Service children	11%
	How many classes	10
	Main military base served	RAF Coningsby
	Distance to military base	4 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	Not currently
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
	Any other relevant information	
Why the school agreed to take part	The Festival of Friends project gave us an opportunity to collaborate with other local schools, share ideas and further strengthen what we offer our Service children.	

Project Overview

To further develop our pastoral support offer for our Service children and their families.
 To ensure no child is missed from receiving pastoral support when a Serving parent is away.
 To raise awareness of what life is like for Service children and their families and what a military lifestyle can entail.

Main project objective

Little Troopers is a support group that we wish to continue and develop; it gives our Service children an opportunity to take part in activities designed to celebrate their military connections and provides more of an outlet for the children to discuss their feelings and experiences. Being a member of Little Troopers enables the children to share a pride in their parent's role, and the group is run by a member of staff who is a military spouse.

We wanted to put in place a 'Deployment Package' in order to develop further support when a parent goes on detachment or on an overseas deployment. This would also include efforts to improve communication with families pre-deployment, so parents can give us advance warning of upcoming deployment dates. A number of our Service families are currently affected by varying length deployments around the world that includes the Falklands, USA, Qatar and Cyprus. We want to offer support where required and provide communication opportunities to improve and maintain the wellbeing of both child and parent alike.

Establish structured processes for Service children starting and leaving St Andrew's and raise the profile of Service children in school.

Intended outcomes of the project

St Andrew's has a high proportion of Service children owing to the number of military airfields within a 15 mile radius of the school; we wanted to create an even more supportive environment where Service children can talk openly about their feelings, feel part of a team and not isolated.

We also wanted to ensure that parents are aware of all the resources available to them and make Service families feel fully supported.

By raising the profile of Service children and the military environment, we aimed to generate a wider appreciation of Service life for the whole school. Ultimately, St Andrew's wants everybody to feel included and supported and to demonstrate that the varied backgrounds that our children come from can lead to a much more enlightened learning experience.



Description of what you did

We have created opportunities where Service children can get together and have 'Little Troopers' meetings, giving them an environment where their voices can be heard. During these regular meetings the children play games, take part in creative activities, have circle time and talk openly about their feelings and experiences.

In April, during the Month of the Military Child, Service children in school led a whole school assembly to help spread awareness of the military lifestyle. They celebrated the opportunities and life experiences that the military offers families, but also openly discussed the issues that they face with parents being absent for long periods of time. They talked about the dandelion flower representing the military child and showed off their amazing artwork.

St Andrew's actively encourages military parents to communicate upcoming deployments to the school so we can support those children directly. We then assist the children with writing emails to their deployed parents to 'keep in touch.' Children are supported in sending photographs of work that they are proud of and writing about what they have been doing in school. Sessions allow us to monitor the impact of the deployment on the child and ELSA pastoral intervention can be provided if necessary. We have a teddy bear mascot, named 'Milly' by the children, who the children can take home for periods of time whilst serving parents are away.

St Andrew's offers a structured and supportive mechanism for children newly arriving into the area and for those that are departing for pastures new.



*"I moved here from America. I like Little Troopers because it has helped me to make new friends and we do lots of different and fun activities."
 (Child in Year 2)*

Details of any funding costs

None above our Service Pupil Premium allocation

What has been the impact?

As a result of running 'Little Troopers', we have raised awareness with children and staff of the Service children within the school and the additional challenges that they face. Peers have developed a greater understanding of the lives of children in the military, and Service children feel that they have a special place within the school. Engagement with our parents has seen an improvement and communication between families and school has increased so that we are able to provide targeted support when needed.

With advancements in technology, we often find that our Service children have regular communication with deployed parents. However, the children love writing emails and sending photographs from school to either their Mum or Dad, and they are thrilled when they receive a reply. It's a special time that they enjoy.

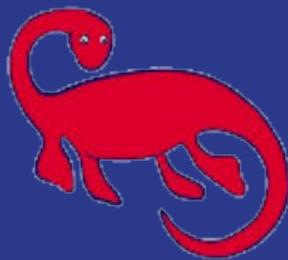
Next steps

To continue to provide tailored pastoral care for all our Service children.

To embed structured processes for Service children starting and leaving St Andrew's to include a Little Troopers welcome pack.

*"I just wanted to say how incredibly grateful my husband and I are for what you do supporting XXXX. The emails you and he send mean so much to both of them, and by association, me. Knowing that he has that little bit of activity to enjoy with you at school also slightly reduces the pressure (and guilt) that I have at home. So, thank you hugely for all that you do supporting us (and any other families you are supporting)."
 (Parent)*

St Faith's Church of England Infant and Nursery School



Title of project	Random Acts of Kindness	
School context	Number on roll	298
	% of Service children	9%
	How many classes	10 (Nursery class / 3x Reception / 3x Year 1 / 3x Year 2)
	Main military base served	RAF Waddington
	Distance to military base	6.4 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	No
	Are any staff Service spouses?	Yes
	Any other relevant information	
Why the school agreed to take part	To help improve and complement the provision we already offer and see what other schools do to support their Armed Forces children.	

Project Overview

Our project was linked to our values and our community, and though our children and families feel a full and important part of our St Faith's family, they don't always feel a part of the military family due to where they live.



Main project objective

- To demonstrate our Christian values of respect, friendship, service in the community, trust, compassion and justice, both within school and in our community.
- To give the children ownership and responsibility in a project that is not solely linked to their schoolwork.
- To develop the confidence of our Service children.
- To feel a part of something special, that is led by the children.

Intended outcomes of the project

To be able to demonstrate and recognise our Christian values of respect, friendship, service in the community, trust, compassion and justice, both within school and in our community.

To work together and develop confidence when given the ownership and responsibility in a special project.

To be aware of other communities and groups within our local community.

To bring military families together, to welcome them to be a part of a smaller community within our St Faith's family, developing relationships and a feeling of belonging.

Description of what you did

We ran coffee mornings for our Service families termly.

We took part in military events (e.g. visiting the Red Arrows).

The children had regular drop-ins with the school's nurture lead.

Staff were always on hand to support our Service families.

The Year 1 and 2 children ran a project called 'Random Acts of Kindness.' They came up with many ideas of how we can involve and serve our local community, including developing our visits to Cloverleaf Care Home, sending letters, cards and pictures to local businesses and to elderly residents in the community who are feeling lonely.

The children also did litter picks locally to help keep our community tidy.

Details of any funding costs

- Litter pickers £50
- Resources for crafts £25
- Resources/refreshments for events £20
- Staff hours £1,200 (staff hours change weekly, depending on the needs of the children and families)
- Travel costs – bus to Red Arrows and cab to Festival of Friends £150

What has been the impact?

The children have loved taking part in this special project. They have developed a greater awareness of the needs of our community.

They have taken part in activities and events, saying how nervous they are initially, but have done it and loved it, feeling a great sense of achievement and increased confidence.

Next steps

To continue to develop our visits to Cloverleaf Care Home and other community service e.g. litter picking.

To speak with Service families about this year and receive feedback of what they think has worked well and how we can improve or develop further next year and beyond.



"Being a military family at St Faiths, the support they provide for my son is a massive help when he has to deal with long periods of time when his dad is away. Even if we were not a military family, I believe all the staff would give the same support to all families whatever their background."

(Parent)

"Not only do they support my son, they are always there for the grown-ups too. When my husband is on deployment, or I am busy with work, my son's class teacher always says they are here if I need them, and I can always email too."

(Parent)

"St Faith's C of E Infant and Nursery School has been a huge support to my three young children but also to myself. As an RAF widow there has been a lot of challenges raising three grieving children, whilst grieving myself. The school staff have been brilliant, a friendly good morning to a much-needed cup of tea and a cuddle when things have felt too much. My children have received a high standard of care, love and support from their teachers and school staff. Even down to asking my thoughts and preferences on if I wanted my children to make Father's Day cards. I believe my children have been carefully thought about and cared for during this difficult time, but also throughout their time at St Faith's and as we move on to our new adventure in New Zealand, St Faith's will always have a special place in our hearts as where my children received an amazing start to their education and Faith journey as Christians. Thank you to all the staff at St Faith's, I couldn't have done this without you. God Bless"

(Parent)

Sutton St. James Primary School



Title of project	Celebration and Recognition of Our Service Children	
School context	Number on roll	130
	% of Service children	1.5% (2 children)
	How many classes	5
	Main military base served	MOD Woodbridge
	Distance to military base	98 miles
	Are any military member on GB?	No
	Are any staff Service spouses?	No
	Any other relevant information	Father is stationed at Woodbridge and is weekendening.
Why the school agreed to take part	We hadn't been involved with anything like this before so felt that it was an opportunity to recognise and involve our two Service children and their family.	

Project Overview

We held an Armed Services Day at our school to raise awareness and celebrate our Armed Forces. In addition, our children did not know that we had Service children on roll, so along with activities on the day, we also invited the father of both Service children into school.

Main project objective

Having only two Service children, we wanted them to feel involved, special, respected and more confident. Through inviting their father into school to talk to classes about his role, we felt that our Service children would feel proud and important and at the same time, for all our children to understand what a vital job our Armed Services do.

Intended outcomes of the project

- To celebrate and involve our Service children and parents.
- To ensure all our children and staff members are aware that we have children who have a parent from a military background.
- To celebrate our Armed Forces through fun and engagement.
- To understand that there are not only combat roles but also other / jobs / roles and careers in the Armed Forces.
- To ensure that our Service children and family feel valued and respected.

Description of what you did

We decided that it would be important to involve a parent, so we invited the father of our Service children in to talk to each class. We also invited in two members of the Army Reservists in to do an end of day assembly and for them to talk about their roles.

Each class made and designed medals, KS2 created job role posters and sunset artwork, Reception made and flew The Red Arrows (made from card) and every class took part in fun drill and assault course activities. Our music teacher taught each class songs that are often sung in the Armed Forces and everyone dressed up for the day in costumes that reflected jobs and roles that people do in Armed Forces.

Details of any funding costs

No funding costs. Volunteers gave up their own time and any costs came down to the use of resources that the school already had.

What has been the impact?

The day raised awareness with children and one part-time staff member commenting that they did not know that the Service children had a parent in the Army. Our two Service children also commented on how much they enjoyed the day and "wanted to do it again."

Next steps

This is the first time we have had the opportunity to recognise, involve and focus on our Service children, so we will continue by possibly starting a club in school for our Service children and their friends. The activities could be chosen by them – such as cooking, sport, etc..

"The Services Day at Sutton St. James School made my children feel special about being a Service child. They felt proud to share their knowledge and also made them realise they were part of a community."
(Parent)

"The day was good. I liked it when I had lunch with Daddy."
(Y1 child)

"It was a lovely day. I liked the obstacle course. Can we do another one?"
(Y3 child)



Tealby Primary School



Title of project		Tealby Tigers Triumph	
School context	Number on roll	84	
	% of Service children	2.4%	
	How many classes	4	
	Main military base served	RAF Coningsby	
	Distance to military base	26 miles	
	Are any military member on GB?	No	
	Are any staff Service spouses?	No	
	Any other relevant information		
Why the school agreed to take part	We want every member of our Service families to feel heard and supported. We want to raise the profile within the school and the wider community and share our experiences with our community. The Festival of Friends gave us an opportunity to further strengthen what we offer.		

Project Overview

Our project was launched - 'Tealby Tigers' - to run fortnightly for Service children and their friends. We wanted to improve the current support for the new Service children joining our school by designing and making a welcome section in our new starter information and promoting our club on our website. Attempts to do this in previous years had fallen flat.

Main project objective

To improve the support offered for our Service children and raise the profile of them and their families within the school setting.

To increase all children's understanding of the Service community within our school.

To ensure that Service children are heard.



Intended outcomes of the project

To encourage peer to peer support through shared experiences and for new Service children joining us to feel welcome and well supported, therefore achieving a seamless transition.

To use the information from the Service children's voice to enhance our pastoral support and respond to their needs.

To provide emotional support for Service children by providing sessions with an ELSA-trained teaching assistant.

To have great relationships with our Armed Forces families and offer all our Service children a safe, secure and enriching environment with staff who understand what they go through.



Description of what you did

Firstly, as the school's 'Service Children's Champion' for the project, I met with our school ambassadors and gave a presentation on the Lincolnshire Festival of Friends. We have a group of seven children from reception to year six. The Year 2 school ambassador is a Service child. I explained the project and asked them to have a discussion as to what ideas they think would be good for Tealby to raise the profile and support Service children. We scheduled a meeting for the following week. Our Year 2 Service child explained the ideas they had discussed, which were an assembly on Armed Forces families to the whole school, a lunchtime club, a name for the lunchtime club, a section in the new starter information and a Service children page on the school website.

I invited the Service children to join me after they had had their lunch and asked them to also bring two friends along for our first dedicated lunchtime club. We discussed what we would like to call our lunchtime club. The name Tealby Tigers was chosen. We all gave ideas of what we would like to do at our lunchtime club and we came up with the following: baking, organising a dress up in green day, making a display to show what we do, welcome bunting and a welcome to Tealby leaflet. We scheduled our next lunchtime club in and decided we would have a craft activity for the display - we were going to colour in dandelions.

In the next few club sessions, we made the lettering for the display, coloured in the dandelions and chose the photographs we would like on the display. This display will be transferred to a school display after the Festival of Friends celebration event in June 2024. We want our community to see what we do to support our Service children.

We had a discussion about our Tealby Tigers webpage and decided that this should include photographs of all the things we do at the lunchtime club. We have begun the initial planning and are currently speaking with our website provider on the best format.

We took three children (two were service children) to the Festival of Friends celebration day, hosting a display of the work they have been doing. They had a fantastic day, looking at other schools' displays and adding some further ideas they would like to try. They were also taught to juggle, their faces beamed with excitement.

Details of any funding costs

Costs were for release time for the staff to help and plan and work alongside the pupils on the project.

Tealby Tigers lunch club is fun. I enjoy the activities, as we have all chosen them.
(7 year old girl)

What has been the impact?

Giving our school ambassadors the opportunity to take the lead in what should be included in the new starter information has been a fundamental part, as this relates to something they have all experienced when they first joined Tealby school. They wanted everyone to be well informed and feel really welcomed at our school.

The creation of Tealby Tigers lunchtime club has raised their profile of this important group within our school community. All the Service children engaged well in the activities and supported each other. This club is run by our ELSA teaching assistant who was also appointed as our Service Children's Champion.

Using pupil voice has been instrumental to our ideas for this school project and pupil voice confirmed that overall the children feel settled and happy at school, they feel valued, important and most of all listened to. They have a safe space to share their thoughts and feelings, their friends have gained a deeper understanding of the challenges they face.

This has been a very positive experience for all involved and it's great to see the positive impact the work has had on our children.

Next steps

To finalise the design and wording to go in the new starter information pack. To finalise and update the website to include a page for Tealby Tigers lunchtime club.



'This child has experienced some challenges in their peer relationships over the past year and has, at times, seemed adrift at school. This project has affirmed their sense of identity, as well as what makes them so unique, in a hugely positive way. The project has helped this child to grow in confidence and to find their voice, both literally and metaphorically, which has resulted in stronger peer relationships and an increased motivation to work hard in their learning.'
(Year 2/3 teacher)



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