

PLYMOUTH SERVICE PUPIL PREMIUM (SPP) REVIEW - OCTOBER 2024



SERVICE PUPIL PREMIUM (SPP)

The Department for Education (DfE) introduced SPP in April 2011 in recognition of the specific challenges children from service families face, and as part of the commitment to delivering the [Armed Forces Covenant](#). Eligible schools receive SPP mainly so that they can offer pastoral support during challenging times, and to help mitigate the negative impact of family mobility, separation or parental deployment on service children. Covering years Reception to Year 11, SPP is currently worth £340 per child (for children who meet the [eligibility criteria](#)).

The SPP is there for schools to provide mainly pastoral support for service children, whereas the [Pupil Premium](#) (PP) was introduced to raise attainment and accelerate progress within disadvantaged groups (closing the attainment gap). *Schools should not combine SPP with PP funding and the spending of each premium should be accounted for separately. **Schools should be held to account for the spending of the SSP through the focus in Ofsted inspections on the progress and attainment of their wider PP eligible pupil cohort.

WHAT IS THE PICTURE IN PLYMOUTH?

The Armed Forces are an integral part of the history and heritage of Plymouth. HMS Devonport is the largest Naval base in Western Europe and Plymouth has twice the national average of forces veterans residing in the city (8.4% - the highest of any unitary Authority). In 2022, School Census data indicated that Plymouth benefited from £893,110 of SSP funding (2666 students in receipt of SPP). The latest 2024-2025 Government figures indicate that, in Plymouth, there are 2580 service family children and young people allocated with funding (£877,200). Data and intelligence collection is challenging but improving. Intelligence gained from the School Census will soon be accompanied by regular reports generated by Local Authority systems (Capita/Eclipse), leading to pupil level data being utilised to identify trends and further target support. The number of service family children with individual schools, across the city, varies greatly (within this study, between 2 and 90 / Ave. = 47 children and young people) and is not always linked to location, within the city or distance to MoD bases. Combined with Devon's figures, Plymouth (as part of wider Devon) has the second highest concentration of veterans in England and Wales.

SERVICE PUPIL PREMIUM STUDY (AUTUMN 2024)

Following a query from the office of Jonny Mercer (Former MP Plymouth Moor View) and consultation from the Military Kids Club Charity, this review aimed to build a picture of school provision in Plymouth, in relation to the use of SPP. The review was conducted through two studies, between July and October 2024 and information was received, or observed, from 32% of Plymouth Schools:

1. Part one of the study took the form of dip sampling of school websites to gain intelligence of school provision and use of SPP funding.
2. Part two of the study included a brief survey, circulated to the ***Young Carers & Service Family Leads Network, to illicit school provision and utilisation of SPP.

The resulting intelligence gained from this study is, of course, only a snapshot of the complete picture across the city. However, this information will be analysed alongside child level intelligence, relating to attainment and attendance, which will inform school CPD, support and transition preparation, for the Local Authority and its partner organisations, within the umbrella of the Plymouth Armed Forces Covenant. This child level intelligence will be available in the Autumn Term of 2024. This review will be presented to the Armed Forces Covenant Leadership Group and the AFC Children, Young People & Families Network, in the Autumn Term of 2024.

THE DIP SAMPLE STUDY (JULY 2024)

This aspect of the review took the form of a desktop review of school websites, to gain information about SPP and school provision.

SUMMARY (QUANTITATIVE)

Of the schools within the dip sample study (July 2024):

- 36% displayed who the school lead was for service family C&YP provision.
- 40% made reference to SPP within the school website.
- 56% made reference to SPP within their wider PP Statements.
- 44% made reference to the monitoring and progress of service family C&YP, within wider PP statements.
- No schools made reference to the amount of SPP received.
- 12% linked SPP to activities to planned to improve attainment.
- No schools linked SPP to activities to improve attendance.
- 88% have information regarding service family C&YP provision within their websites.
- Ofsted Ratings for school within this sample: 4% = Inadequate, 4% = RI, 72% = Good, 20% = Outstanding. No trends identified.

DIP SAMPLE FINDINGS (QUALITATIVE)

In-School Activity – Funded by SPP. Examples Included:

- School Troopers Club (enrichment opportunities and a sense of community); Weekly groups; Designated adult; Trips (theatre) and visits; Staff run clubs; Weekly coffee mornings (with the schools SENCo); Visits from Naval Welfare, Friends & Families; Visits by military vehicles: Assault courses; Cream teas and picnics; Small group and 1-2-1 sessions; Support groups for pupils; MKC Heroes club; Field Gun club; Dedicated web page; Whole school Trauma Informed Practice training (all staff); Academic interventions to address gaps in reading/writing/maths; 1-2-1 support for families experiencing separation; Subsidisation for school trips; Targeted access to the school Counsellor; Leaders facilitated experienced teaching staff to deliver high quality interventions and tutoring to targeted pupils eligible for SPP funding; FSA working closely with families to support them through deployments; Pizza Hut, Clip & Climb visits; Horse Riding & Donkey care opportunities; Funding for teacher to attend training and set up a Military Kids Club; Time given for teacher to meet with other MKC Leads to gather ideas for how to support military children.

THE SURVEY STUDY (SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2024)

This aspect of the review took the form of a short online survey to service family C&YP Leads, in schools across the city, to gain information about SPP and school provision.

SUMMARY (QUANTITATIVE)

Of the schools which took part in the September / October Survey:

- Schools had an average of 47 service family children and young people in receipt of SPP.
- 69% describe the use of their SPP allocation within their wider Pupil Premium Statement.
- 69% indicated that they specifically monitor (attainment and progress) for your service family children and young people.
- 79% indicated that they utilise consultation to understand the needs of their children, young people and families.
- 50% of schools indicated that they would be happy to share their practice with other schools.
- Ofsted Rating: 100% Good. No trends identified.

SURVEY FINDINGS (QUALITATIVE)

How do schools gain intelligence to further understand the needs of their service family children and young people? Example Strategies Included:

- Surveys; Utilising Government Guidance; Liaising with local external agencies (including Royal British Legion, Aggies); Regular discussions with parents; Parent Support Advisor meetings; Coffee mornings; Making contact with C&YP when they join the school; Liaising with welfare teams regarding dates of deployments; Pupil conferencing; utilising Maslow HoN.

How do schools monitoring development and progress of the service family children cohort? Example Strategies Included:

- Check attendance levels; 12 weekly progress reviews; Behaviour reports; Termly data meetings; Termly data drops; SENDCo surgeries; Senior leadership / Armed Forces Support Worker consultation (academic & pastoral); Specific attainment and attendance tracking.

How do schools utilise their SPP funding? Examples Included:

- Clubs; ELSA support; Trips, events and experiences; Themed books; Deployment support: Support from MAST and charities; Key worker; PSA support; Support in teaching (gaps in learning due to military movements between posts).

What other in-school activity takes place? Examples Included:

- Weekly clubs (baking, Lego, colouring, outside activities); Military Kids Club Heroes Lunch Club; Military Kids Club drop-in sessions / check-ins; Themed assemblies; Individual support for families (e.g. deployment, mental health support); Regular meet-ups; Remembrance events (Poppy Pebbles); Armed Forces Day; KS3/4 Club; Parent Coffee mornings; Sign-posting; ELSA support; EHAT; Resources sent home (including newsletters from other agencies); Support / interventions outside core lessons by T.A.; SENDCo organised social skills / friendship groups / 1-2-1 tuition; Mildred Tumbleweed visit; Horizon Colourings visit; Noticeboard; Military Adventure Bear scheme; Forces Friends Club; City led events.

What further support does your school require? Examples Included:

- More free activities available from outside agencies to come into school; Counselling availability; Opportunities for our children to meet with other service families; More support and guidance on housing (especially when parents separate); More support for the remaining parent when deployment takes place; More space and time within school; More Military Kids Club events.

NOTES

Whilst it is good practice to demonstrate each school's plans to support service family children and young people, the recording of this, within Pupil Premium Statements is currently optional. The DfE provide a template for recording / planning Pupil Premium funding, which includes an optional section at the end of the document (*Two questions within this template include: 'How our service pupil premium allocation was spent last academic year' and 'The impact of that spending on service pupil premium eligible pupils'*).

** Schools should not combine Service Pupil Premium with the main pupil premium funding and the spending of each premium should be accounted for separately (Source: MoD / DfE Guidance - Service Pupil Premium: What you need to know (Updated 29 August 2024).*

*** The DfE guidance (Guidance - Pupil premium: Overview, Updated 30 September 2024) goes on to include the following guidance relating to Accountability:*

- **Accountability - Schools must show how they are using their pupil premium effectively:**
 - by publishing a statement on their website each academic year using the DfE template*
 - through inspections by Ofsted - inspectors may discuss plans schools have to spend their pupil premium*
 - through scrutiny of pupil premium plans by governors and trustees*

**** The 'Young Carers & Service Family Lead's Network' meet 3 times per year, face to face and receive training, partner updates and engage in collaborative activity (e.g. Month of the Military Child, Armed Forces Day etc). The network is open to all schools and attendees include the range of school colleagues who are delivering day to day support from children and young people (e.g. Teachers, Family Support Advisors, Teaching Assistants etc.). Colleagues who provide support to service families are often also the school coordinator for Young Carers. The agenda for these network meetings is in-part informed by the work of the Armed Forces Covenant – Children, Young People and Families Theme Group (a sub-group of the Plymouth Armed Forces Covenant).*

OBSERVATIONS

From the data received within this study and considering the existing local / national intelligence, the following observations can be made, regarding schools within Plymouth:

- 1. A figure approaching one million pounds enters the city's educational system each year.** No central coordination of this funding is currently present, however there is a wealth of advice regarding the [utilisation of this funding](#), from a range of organisation, charities and government sources.
- 2. Many schools utilise this funding well**, understanding the needs of their children and young people (utilising consultation), providing a wide range of pastoral and academically supportive activity for service family children and young people. **Some schools do not demonstrate how they utilise SPP funding** (separately from Pupil Premium) to support service family children and young people. Schools do not indicate how much SPP they receive each year.
- 3. Many schools communicate their pastoral support for service family children and young people, within their schools' websites, well**, not only demonstrating their provision, but raising awareness of the challenges faced by service families. **This is not the case in every school.** Only some schools identify a lead member of staff to support service family C&YP.
- 4. Many, but not all, schools communicate how they monitor progress and development of their service family C&YP cohort.**
- 5. Schools do not generally communicate the attainment or attendance performance of the service family cohort, within their wider PP Statements.**

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS

The information gained within this study, is only a snapshot of what provision takes place within the city, however it does indicate that there is good provision in place, in many of the city's schools, that supports the wellbeing of service family children and young people and attempts to reduce or remove the challenges that being part of a service family may (or may not) place on children and young people. This study also indicates that the utilisation of SPP is not clearly described in many of our schools.

A programme of advice and scrutiny to ensure that best practice is spread across the city could be introduced. Elements of collective support could potentially include:

- Advice, in the form of signposting to existing information and/or collation of information within a central area.
- Creation of a Plymouth based toolkit/resource.
- Scrutiny in the form of the schools undertaking the Thriving Lives Toolkit (self-evaluation) and/or inclusion of service family related content within existing programmes.
- Working with wider partners including the SCiP Alliance (Collaborative project – regarding collective use of SPP) and or regional partners (e.g. Portsmouth / Gosport).

For any questions relating to this review, please contact michael.house@plymouth.gov.uk