



Ministry  
of Defence

## Service Pupil Premium Examples of Best Practice



## Foreword

The Department for Education introduced the Service Pupil Premium in April 2011 in recognition of the specific and unique challenges children from Service families face. It also forms part of the Government's commitment to delivering the Armed Forces Covenant.

Since its inception, the Service Pupil Premium has assisted schools in providing the opportunities and means to offer the additional support these children may need during times of deployment and mobility. There are numerous examples of how exceptional practice within schools has made a positive difference to the lives of Service children.

Within this booklet you will find a selection of effective, creative and innovative ways in which both primary and secondary schools have used the available funding to support Service children. The ideas included range from funding liaison officers to supplying memory boxes for the children; they all have a common goal, to provide additional pastoral support to Service families.

In writing this foreword I would also like to thank those schools involved with this project, for their dedication in supporting Service children. There are over 10,000 schools who are involved in the education of children from Service families. Your hard work and professionalism is greatly appreciated and I thank you for making a difference to the lives of our Service children.

*Lt Gen James Bashall*

## Wittering Primary School

**School Profile:** Primary

**Age Range of pupils:** 4-11

**Number of pupils on roll:** 304

**Number of Service Children on roll:** 208

### Contact Name and Address:

Mr Rhys Thrower  
Wittering Primary School  
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Wittering Primary School is a mid-sized school to the north of Peterborough. We are sited in the village of Wittering next to the RAF base with about two thirds of our pupils from Service families and an annual turnover of approximately 23%.

When we first received Service Pupil Premium (SPP) we took some time over its use and deployment. We discussed our ideas with parents, children and also with our links on the base. (This relationship is very important for both sides including links to further funding such as Community Covenant or Education Support Fund.)

It was clear we needed to implement something to help those families with a member currently deployed. We set up an "Out Of Area" club which was run by the SPP co-ordinator and other staff members. This provided enjoyable activities such as table tennis and construction and we also gave the children the opportunity to have time to make something for or write to the person that was on deployment. We also invited parents and younger siblings so they could have some quality time together within school. It also enabled us an opportunity to speak to the children about how they were feeling and address any worries they may have. Subsequently we also discovered just how many of our non-service families also had a person working away from the family home for long periods of time. This helped the integration of families further from both service and civilian backgrounds.

We use SPP to set up our "Settling In" packs. This includes information for the children and a 'treasure hunt' to enable the children to explore where or what the key things are (teaching assistant names, where toilets are, etc) that they may be too concerned with to ask about. We link this to a buddy system amongst the children so they have someone at all times to communicate with. We use more of our SPP for providing teaching assistant hours to address when children join us with SEN. We move quickly in these situations as we never know how long we have until the child moves again, so it is imperative that we implement things quickly. This allows us to assess and sort out programmes and interventions fast. We operate a similar system by funding hours from our Families Centre for 1:1 sessions for those children who are finding deployment difficult and need that extra support.

We have also set up a Children's Board in conjunction with the nearby base and other local stakeholders to ensure the provision is the best it can be in the community. We also revamped our library to create a new, exciting environment with a focussed nurture area for children who are feeling potential pressures of a parent being away, etc.

The rest of the SPP is focussed on employing a teacher/HLTA each week to concentrate on small groups of Service children who are within the middle achiever group to encourage them further. They work alongside the teacher to try and realise more of their potential academically, negating the progress potentially lost by a school move. We certainly do not have all the answers and are continually looking at how we use our SPP effectively in increasingly difficult financial constraints, but we do see it having impact not just academically but also, just as importantly, emotionally and socially.

## Fawley Infant and Blackfield Primary Schools

**School Profile:** Infant and Primary

**Age Range of pupils:** 4-11

**Number of pupils on roll:** 612

**Number of Service Children on roll:** 33

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Fawley Infant and Blackfield Primary schools, part of the Inspire Learning Federation, are in an area known as the Waterside which is between Southampton and the New Forest. 17 Port & Maritime Regiment RLC are based at nearby Marchwood, and trickle movements throughout the academic year mean lots of different induction, support and nurture activities take place across the schools.

We need resources which are portable, appealing to everyone and especially relevant to children from age 4 -11 years. A simple, effective and inexpensive resource that has proved all of these things is a giant world map oilcloth. The oilcloth is used in lots of ways and generates many valuable conversations, which in turn informs school about how we are able to help support the children and families. It covers tables at support groups, dinner halls, floors and is even spread out on the school field on a sunny day, creating opportunities for talk about issues which affect children and are instigated in an informal way. The oilcloth is a good ice breaker with new children. Young children especially like to sit, lie and roll on it, point out countries and seas and any places relevant to them and talk about their feelings and changes at home in a unpressurised way.

When the oilcloth is being used, we notice a real camaraderie amongst Service children, but also empathy and comparisons from class mates as they gather round and all talk about destinations and their connections to them. Someone might track a route from the UK to the Falkland Islands where their parent is deployed and a peer may track a route to Spain where their grandparents live. This gives children a better understanding of where places are in the world and a greater awareness of the Service lifestyle. Some typical quotes when using the oilcloth map are:

*"We can see the whole world; we don't need to go in aeroplanes"*

*"I can find Fiji, I like where my family live"*

*"My dad has been to all those places"*

It really is about getting the communication going, sitting side by side, looking at the map or using it as a prop behind a craft activity such as scrapbooking or as part of a game. We already had wall maps and globes around the schools but the oilcloth works because it is just a little bit different and it's practical. We now have three across the schools, and our top tip is to order one in a very large size!

## Hele's School

**School Profile:** Secondary

**Age Range of pupils:** 11-19

**Number of pupils on roll:** 1236

**Number of Service Children on roll:** 89

### Contact Name and Address:

Wendy Farnham  
Director of Business and Finance  
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A relatively large percentage of the intake for Hele's School is from Service families - 7.1%, or 89 students. In such circumstances the transition process is crucial in getting young people into school and immersed in the culture as quickly as possible, and identifying a mentor in the form of another Service child who understands the pressure of moving around schools goes a long way to building friendships and confidence for the new student.

The school uses money received from the Service Pupil Premium to help employ a dedicated member of staff with responsibility for oversight of the personal and academic development of Service children. This adult mentor understands the demands placed on working parents in the Armed Forces, as well as the implications for the children and works with Heads of Houses to track the progress, attendance, commitment to learning and pastoral welfare of this group of young people. He understands that school routines are helpful when dealing with separation and worry, but some days are just too challenging and so it is important to have support in school for those tough days. As a result of the introduction of the mentor, we have seen a direct increase in attendance of Service children. The use of funding to target intervention where a Service child's progress or commitment to learning has fallen short of expectation has also been used to good effect, with the result that all Service children in 2015-2016 made better than expected progress in GCSE outcomes. Students comment that having an interested adult mentor who understands the demands placed on Service families has helped them to feel less isolated, especially when one of their parents is on deployment, and has helped them to build strong friendship groups to support them with their attendance during difficult times.

The school is also part of Plymouth's HMS Heroes Group - a unique 'student voice' group originally formed in the City of Plymouth for the support of Service children and young people. It helps students with Service family links with the practical aspects of contact, and we deal with such demands and strains on a bespoke basis. Members of HMS Heroes are ambassadors and young advocates for Service families. Most importantly, they are friends for each other - especially in times of need. Having an ex-serviceman working with Service children is incredibly powerful. For example, we set up radio contact with a child and his dad aboard ship to share some really good news about achievement in school. Both dad and son were overwhelmed at the power of such contact and, although brief, the feel good factor afforded to both parties was immense and sent them back off to their respective jobs with a spring in their step and an air of positivity and optimism; worth every penny of Service Pupil Premium funding!



## Wolvey C of E Primary School

**School Profile:** Primary

**Age Range of pupils:** 4-11

**Number of pupils on roll:** 200

**Number of Service Children on roll:** 71

### Contact Name and Address:

Tana Wood  
Wolvey C of E Primary School  
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On average we have about 70 Service children on roll from 30 Signals Regiment and the Queen's Gurkha Signals, which is approximately one third of our whole school population. In terms of mobility this means that approximately 20-30 children leave and join us each year.

We feel that it is vital for all of our children to be supported when they first join the school and throughout their time with us. It is not about using funding for school trips or music lessons but by providing the right support when needed.

Part of our Service Pupil Premium funding provides a teaching assistant within school (an ex-military wife), who also holds the post of Service Children Liaison Mentor. This member of staff runs an induction and transfer programme which collates as much information as possible on the child when they enter school and acts as an extra point of contact for parents. This member of staff also attends new intake evenings and parents' evenings. They have an overview of which children are coming in and leaving (our children are given 'take away photos' and letter boxes as presents when they go) and are able to share information with key staff. This provision is seen as vital, so that Service children whose education may have been disrupted due to transferring schools more often than others, settle in quickly and continue with their learning.

We are also part fund a Nepalese Teaching Assistant who is able to support Gurkha families coming into school and support staff with any language difficulties.

The Service Mentor, plus another teaching assistant (whose husband is still serving), take Service children out of class for a weekly, informal social session. This provides opportunities for the sharing of news, creating artwork such as poppies for Remembrance Day or reading. Children are timetabled in for this session or added if we know that a parent may be on training or longer deployment so that we are able to focus on them.

We have also offered a lunchtime MESS club once a week for Service children where they can bring a friend, have lunch in a social environment and share experiences.

The funding has enabled us to provide every Service child with a diary in which they can record their thoughts and feelings and a communication book for parents - as many of our Service children come to school by bus. We have also bought in resources such as Joffli Bears for children to take home and books about parents being deployed. Displays around the school also show where parents might be in the world, as well as where all our children are from. All of this has provided much needed emotional and social support for our Service children and by having two members of staff who have been in the same situation, they are able to empathise with families.

Another element of our funding is used to organise additional social events where parents are invited in to school and given the opportunity to chat to other Service parents whilst enjoying refreshments.

## Joyce Frankland Academy

**School Profile:** Secondary

**Age Range of pupils:** 11-18

**Number of pupils on roll:** 900

**Number of Service Children on roll:** 44

### Contact Name and Address:

Melissa Garnham  
Service Children Liaison Officer  
Joyce Frankland Academy  
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Joyce Frankland Academy, Newport is a village comprehensive, originally founded in 1588 as a Grammar School. With 900 pupils aged 11-18 our intake comes from far and wide, with the majority of pupils arriving in Year 7 from small rural primary schools from across a 25 mile radius. Within the Academy, on average, 5% of pupils are from Service families based at the local barracks.

In 2013 the decision was made that the most effective way to utilise the Service Pupil Premium was to employ a member of pastoral staff whose role was, and continues to be, the Service Children Liaison Officer. This position involves working pastorally with our Service pupils; building strong links with the local barracks through monthly meetings with the battalion Welfare Officers; regular visits to the feeder primary schools throughout the year especially at Year 6 transition time; building strong relationships with pupils before they start at the Academy in Year 7; and being the main point of contact within the Academy for Service families, not just on a daily basis but also at parents' evenings and other Academy events. In addition to this, the role encompasses mid-year admissions, attending deployment briefings and the Service Children In State Schools (SCISS) Conference, being the face of the Academy at barracks events and submitting applications to the MOD Education Support Fund.

This role has created, within school, a strong knowledge of exactly who the Service children are and what their additional needs may be, enabling full integration into the Academy community. This has been acknowledged in our recent Ofsted report which said:

**The school provides exceptional support for pupils of families in the armed services. As a result these pupils are thriving.**

As a result of the work that has been done, there has been a change in attitude towards Service children in the wider Academy community through an increased understanding of their life experiences as forces children. We can provide revision guides, study skills support and recreational activities. Further value has been added as a result of receiving the Service Pupil Premium - extra mural activities and support with transport home to the barracks which are rural, remote and have no public transport and extra-curricular sporting activities, further enabling our Service students to become fully absorbed into Academy life.



## St Michael's Primary and Nursery School

**School Profile:** Primary and Nursery

**Age Range of pupils:** 3-11

**Number of pupils on roll:** 189

**Number of Service Children on roll:** 79

### **Contact Name and Address:**

Gail Burns

St Michael's Primary School & Nursery

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St Michael's Primary School and Nursery is situated near the Merville Barracks in Colchester, Essex. As a result 40% of our pupils come from Service families. As a school we constantly review how we spend our Service Pupil Premium (SPP) in order that our children make the best possible gains both socially and academically.

Service children can attend many schools and for us, it is essential that the children and their families arrive, settle and quickly feel part of the school community. We strongly believe that when children and their families are emotionally settled, children will achieve better outcomes.

It is this belief that led us to create our Student and Family Support Team (SAFS) last year. The team of staff are focussed on the early identification of children and/or their families who require additional support. This is done through an induction meeting with all parents when children join the school, along with time spent getting to know children and their families.

The support provided is bespoke to each individual child and family member. Academic support is provided in the form of additional sessions with one of our SAFS team, precision teaching sessions take place, where gaps in learning are quickly identified and a series of learning sequences are taught to the child. Speech and Language support is also provided by our ELKLAN trained Learning Mentor.

Social and emotional support is provided by our trained Play Therapist, who also leads the SAFS team. Activities include Lego Play Therapy, Drawing Therapy and Sensory Therapy.

Support is also provided to parents in the form of weekly coffee mornings where parents have the opportunity to spend time with the SAFS Leader and the school Family Support Worker, discussing issues of concern or just having the opportunity to sit and chat.

We have recently been fortunate in gaining funding from the Ministry of Defence and this was used to create a Community Hub area where the SAFS team are now housed and a Sensory Room equipped with the latest sensory equipment. Both these additions have meant that we have been able to provide support to a greater number of children and their families.

We are incredibly proud of educating Service children and as a result of the support that we provide children have an equal opportunity to their non-mobile peers to achieve emotionally and academically. This can be seen in our end of year outcomes where our Service children achieve results that are either in line or better than their peers.



## Montgomery Junior School

**School Profile:** Community Junior School

**Age Range of pupils:** 7-11

**Number of pupils on roll:** 232

**Number of Service Children on roll:** 136

### Contact Name and Address:

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School Business Manager  
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Montgomery Junior School has just over 50% of pupils from Service families and many of our dedicated team have links to the military or local community knowledge. We have invested the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) in people, resources, initiatives, subscriptions and activities. Through consultation with our children, staff, governors and parents we have been able to use the funding to support the differing needs of our Service children.

One of our major successes is the employment of our Community Engagement Coordinator (CEC). Following the research of effective emotional social health and wellbeing (ESHWB) practice we identified the need for a dedicated staffing resource to deliver a comprehensive support programme for our Service children during periods of parental deployment, on joining and leaving the school and providing an enhanced pastoral provision. This role supports key school improvement priorities to close the learning gap as well as the social and economic gap that continue to provide challenges to Service pupils and families.

The CEC works with children and families from admission enquiry stage, supporting individuals throughout school life and during exit (including at non-standard times), including the following family support:

- Transition and integration of pupils
- Building relationships with parents and the school
- Supporting families of service personnel from Commonwealth countries
- Timely transfer of pupil records and liaison with transition schools
- Supporting a wider range of family pressures including emotional and behavioural issues, bereavement, divorce and separation
- The knowledge to offer practical solutions, reassurance and signposting
- Establishing links to outside agencies, welfare organisation and service communities that will support the needs of all pupils and families and the school.

In addition to the CEC we have used our Service Pupil Premium to fund initiatives such as enhanced Curriculum Provision, Early Morning Clubs and Activities, and in particular a Play Therapy Counsellor which our in-school case studies evidence that children have achieved the following outcomes:

- Reduction in anxiety in some situations and improvement in relationships at home
- Understanding of loss and grief
- Ability to maintain self-esteem through family transition
- Improvements in friendships
- Improved concentration and participation in class
- Improved attendance
- Expression of feelings through the use of paint and clay
- Improved self-esteem
- Building resilience

## Boringdon Primary School

**School Profile:** Primary

**Age Range of pupils:** 4-11

**Number of pupils on roll:** 432

**Number of Service Children on roll:** 34

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Boringdon Primary School  
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At Boringdon Primary School our aim is to ensure that no children are disadvantaged at school in any way. Our focus with Service children is to ensure no child is disadvantaged due to the service of their parent.

We use our Service Pupil Premium to contribute towards the following:

- Monitoring of Service children's progress compared to the wider school population to ensure that they learn, develop and achieve their own expected level of progress.
- Intervention strategies and support are put into place to support their learning.
- The provision of a trained Teaching Assistant to provide pastoral support and guidance for families.
- The provision of external Learning Mentor Support to work with individuals to build social skills, self-esteem and develop positive attitudes to learning thus raising academic attainment.
- Membership of HMS Heroes.
- Mutual support encouraged through membership of and trips organised by HMS Heroes coordinator e.g. Plymouth Raiders, Military Youth Choir etc.
- Extra-curricular activities to enable Service children to take part in certain activities that may not have been available to them due to the absence of one of their key adults. This has included, going to the theatre and 'wild in the woods'.
- Forest School activities to provide a different experience. The children have really enjoyed being able to learn outdoors and this has provided great chances to develop children's self-esteem and confidence. It also provides an outlet to provide emotional support for children who need it.

As with everything we do at school the measures put into place do make a positive difference. They help to ensure that our Service children become tolerant, caring and well rounded individuals with the skills to enable them to learn, develop and progress.

The additional events and extra-curricular activities have enabled children to feel special and that they are receiving things that other non-Service children might take for granted. In many cases, children's personalities have blossomed and they have been able to mingle and make friends with children that before, they may not have had the courage to do so.

Primarily the measures we have put in place help Service children to access peers/adults that they feel they can approach and talk to that can reassure, help and if necessary advise. This enables them to achieve and progress without any disadvantage due to parental service.

The Directorate Children and Young People (DCYP) provides the single Ministry of Defence (MOD) focus for all issues relating to Service children, both overseas and in the UK.

Within the UK, DCYP works closely with the Armed Forces Covenant Team, the Devolved Administrations and the Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force Families Federations. It also holds elements of other Government departments, local authorities and other providers that have statutory responsibilities for Service children, to account. This is in order to ensure that Service children suffer no disadvantage because of their Service status.

Within DCYP, the Childrens Education Advisory Service (CEAS) provides a point of contact for all Service parents who have any queries or concerns regarding any element of education, including school admissions and SEND support. The skilled and empathetic advisors provide advice, guidance and support to parents, wherever they are in the world, and this is supported further through the work of Parent Support Officers who can assist parents with specific issues relating to education.

**CEAS can be contacted by email:  
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