

CASE STUDY



ALDERWOOD SCHOOL, ALDERSHOT

An all-through school (4-16) close to Aldershot Garrison, which is home to over 10,000 military personnel.

Around 165 (12%) pupils are from Armed Forces families; the school's 2019-20 Service Pupil Premium (SPP) funding was £47,400.



This all-through school near Aldershot Garrison provides bespoke support to mitigate high mobility.

THE NEED

Service children typically attend Alderwood for 2 to 3 years (though this varies with parental rank). Pupils move on a rolling basis, in contrast to schools inside the Garrison whose pupils tend to move en masse when regiments are posted.

With growing numbers of Service children and high mobility, the school has identified a need for strong pastoral support for pupils and parents. In some cases, there is also a need for catch up programmes for pupils whose mobility has resulted in significant gaps, particularly in English and Maths.

SOLUTION TAKEN

- Service children are assessed on entry to establish their particular strengths and needs. The senior team engages with parents, and the school they have transferred from (though this can be more challenging if the school is overseas).
- The school employs a pastoral support worker, part of whose time is dedicated to Service children, and four ELSAs, and draws on SPP and pupil premium funding to employ a school counsellor for two days each week.
- A Service children champion has been appointed to co-ordinate additional support such as a weekly drop in where pupils can make contact with other pupils in similar circumstances.
- Service children moving to Alderwood at one of the main entry points – such as from year 6 to year 7 – can attend the summer school part-funded through SPP and pupil premium.
- While the school pools its SPP funding for overall support provision for Service children, bespoke support also addresses specific individual needs. For example, if a Service child requires reading support – perhaps having attended schools which use different phonics programmes – they will be given priority in the school's reading recovery programme, for which places are limited, or a similar, age-appropriate catch up programme.

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THE SCIP ALLIANCE

The Service Children's Progression Alliance leads UK and international work to improve the educational progression of the children of armed forces personnel and veterans.


We undertake research, champion better policy and support effective practice to enable thriving lives for Service children.

The SCiP Alliance's UK Hub network connects and supports hundreds of school, college, university and community professionals, so that evidence-based, effective work can be developed and shared nationally.

WE ARE ALSO

PROUD of our work with the Garrison radio station to send messages and podcasts from pupils to parents on deployment over Christmas.

Pupils can face particular challenges at times of deployment, with a parent away from home (and the other parent possibly being under increased pressure). Counselling support can be particularly important for Service children at these times.

 When I joined Alderwood, their Army Club was so supportive to me and helped me and other people when their parents were away

(Y8 student)

 Our approach is to use flexibility over how the SPP is spent to put provision in place for when it is needed

(Headteacher)

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Strategies and interventions are monitored very closely; impact is tracked down to individual pupil level. In primary classes, progress reviews are carried out four times a year and the results are broken down by pupil characteristics, with academic gaps for Service children being identified and included in the pupil premium report to the governing board. There is a comparable system in place for secondary classes. The belief is that good academic performance indicates that pastoral support arrangements are working well.

PRACTITIONER ADVICE

- Our channels of communication with the Army are very valuable; advance notification of unit moves enables forward planning such as making contact with incoming pupils' current schools. The Garrison tells personnel with school-age children about SPP and encourages them to make their child's Service status known to the school. They are told to ask the school how SPP is used, in the understanding that it is intended for pastoral support (and is not a hardship fund or a personal budget).
- Our whole school interventions particularly benefit Service children, especially those moving mid year: the "Play Pals" and "Lunch Bunch" schemes allow infant-age pupils struggling with interpersonal relationships to take part in supported play with peers. The equivalents of this in junior and secondary phases are quiet zones, which provide a positive space for pupils to be in and help with socialisation.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

<http://www.alderwood.hants.sch.uk/>

The Service Children's Progression Alliance is hosted by the University of Winchester and supported by the

