The Educational Attainment of Army Children

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Executive Summary

Project A: Pupil Survey & Attainment Data

A survey study was conducted with a total of 102 year 10 and 11 secondary school pupils and 42 year 6 pupils. An equal number of Army pupils and Non-Army pupils made up the primary and secondary school samples. Key findings from this project were:

- A significant difference was found in Year 10 and 11 English attainment scores, with Army pupils performing significantly lower in English compared to Non-Army pupils. A lower proportion of Year 6 Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they agreed with the statement *I get enough help with learning.*
- A higher proportion Year 10 and 11 Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported strongly agreeing with the statement *I feel I am reaching my potential with my school work*
- 52.4% of Year 6 pupils and 33.3% of Year 10 and 11 Army Pupils reported having studied aspects of the curriculum more than once. The only subjects reported to having been taught more than once were Maths, science and History.
- A higher proportion of Year 6 Army pupils compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they *did not like break times very much.*
- Fewer Year 6 Army pupils reported *never* feeling lonely in school, compared to Non-Army Pupils. Conversely, a higher proportion of Army pupils reported *sometimes* and *often* feeling lonely in school.

Project B: Parent Survey

140 Army parents participated in an online survey exploring their perceptions of their child(ren)'s attainment and engagement in school. Key findings from this survey were:

- The majority of parents reported that Army pupils have additional needs in school compared to Non-Army pupils. Such additional needs included; *understanding and support during parental deployment* and *help to catch up on work missed during moving.*
- 47% of parents reported that their child had repeated parts of the curriculum after moving.
- Over 40% of parents reported that, when their child moved school, they found it difficult to discuss their child's achievement levels at previous schools.

- The majority of parents reported that they felt their child required additional support while a parent is deployed.
- 27.2% of parents reported that their child's current school has activities specifically for Army children.

Project C: Teacher Survey

187 teachers completed an online survey exploring their experiences of teaching and supporting Army pupils in school. The survey included questions exploring Army pupils engagement and experience in school. Key finding from this survey found:

- 66% of teachers reported that Army children have a different school experience to Non-Army children and 78.8% of teachers reported that Army pupils have additional needs to Non-Army pupils.
- 60.4% of teachers reported having sufficient support to effectively teach Army pupils. However, teachers highlighted the need for time and information sharing to ensure they understand an Army pupils previous educational experience.
- 64.7% of teachers feel confident in supporting or advising Army children with concerns relating to Army life.
- 34.3% of teachers reported that their school offers activities especially for Army children.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings from the three projects, four core recommendations emerge from the project:

1. To continue to examine differences in attainment between Army and Non-Army pupils, particularly with regard to English.
2. Future research should explore the issue of Special Educational Needs in greater detail
3. There is a need to increase awareness of the additional needs of Army Pupils in School
4. Increase the number of activities to support children and young people's integration into schools
5. Develop greater support for schools to find out more about an Army pupil's previous educational experience.

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Introduction & Literature Review

The Department of Education (2012) reports that there are 32,000 Service Children in state funded primary schools and 18,000 Service children in state funded secondary schools. Children who have at least one parent in the armed forces may face unique challenges during their educational years, for example attending various schools due to relocation of their parent(s). One of the main concerns of Service parents is the lack of continuity and stability that this mobility means for their children (National Audit Office [NAO], 2013). The NAO also reported 42% of Service parents found that moving schools had a negative effect on their child's academic performance with the most common problem being differences in the curriculum between schools. This latter concern is echoed by OFSTED (2011) who report that due to the mobility of Service Children, many end up repeating or missing areas of the curriculum. Moreover, OFSTED state that schools find it challenging to set targets for Service Children and there is a lack of efficiency when transferring information between schools, especially for children with Special Educational Needs. Together, these reports suggest that schools are not fully aware of the needs of Service Children and therefore, the support is not effective.

Although research has reported on the negative educational outcomes for Service Children, recent data suggests that Service Children are performing academically equal to, or beyond, their peers. For example, The Department of Education (2012) report that at Key Stage 2, 83% of Service Children achieved the expected level in Maths compared to 81% of Non-Service Children and at Key Stage 4, 63% of Service Children achieved grades A* to C in at least 5 GCSEs compared to 59% of Non-Service Children. The Department of Education (2012) also suggest that compared to their peers, Service Children are less likely to be economically deprived and to have Special Educational Needs. The Army Families Federation expanded on the research conducted in 2012 to submit Freedom of Information Requests to Local Authorities in 2013 and 2014 to explore how, if at all, the achievement and attendance statistics have changed over this period. Full details of the Freedom of Information Act Requests can be found in Appendix i. As the data presented show, the data on attendance and attainment from these Local Authorities showed little difference between Service Pupils and Non-Service Pupils. When making comparisons, it is therefore necessary to compare Service Children not to the national average but to children who are similar (e.g. same number of parents in the home, similar social-economic-status, similar educational level). This has the potential to provide a clearer picture on the possible impact of factors such as mobility on the educational attainments of Service Children.

There is a limited amount of extant literature that specifically explores the educational experiences of Service Children and that which has been conducted, has been undertaken with small samples of children and young. However, the following summary will outline the most relevant studies for this topic, all of which have been conducted in the UK. A full reference list for the key research can be found in appendix iii.

Clifton (2007) conducted a longitudinal study that aimed to explore the educational experience of Service Children. By use of interviews and observations of four year eight students and interviews with their parents, teachers and other education and Army professionals, the study concluded that the Service Children's needs were not clearly identified or understood, and therefore neither the Army nor the schools were meeting these needs. Further, it was concluded that the mobile lifestyle has a negative effect on the children's educational experience, and as a result, the children develop unique coping strategies. The study suggested that more thorough research into all aspects of the educational experiences and achievements of the Service Child should be conducted, and that military and educational policy makers, teachers and parents of the Army child should collaborate and discuss how to improve the experience of the Service child, specifically during their education.

The impact of pupil mobility due to the relocation of their parents is an important issue to consider in relation to the academic attainment of Service Children. Pupil mobility may be defined as the change of schools a pupil may experience part way through the school year (Strand, 2002). It has been suggested that the educational attainment of Service Children is equal to or higher than that of their peers, however there are indications that mobility may impact on this (Department for Education, 2010). Mobility may slow the academic progress of Service Children and extra support may be necessary as a result to achieve the grades predicted prior to transferring schools (Ofsted, 2011). Evidence of this may be seen in the study conducted by O'Neill (2012), who found that Service Children performed lower than expected and the impacts of mobility on attainment and behaviour were

evident over 6 months after the transfer. This longitudinal study collected data from seven newly arrived pupils, at three assessment points with 3-4 month breaks in between. On assessment 1, it was found that all the children reported feeling nervous or upset to start their new school, and were reported as visibly distressed or withdrawn in class, or showed emotional outbursts during the first two weeks of school; two children of which were also reported to have undiagnosed SEN. Further, three of the children's school records had not been sent to the school, and although a pastoral induction plan was found to be put in place, it was noted that not all teachers participated in this. By assessment three, all children had made academic progress but six were still working below the expected level for their age. In addition, four children continued to have friendship issues, three children continued to have behavioural and emotional difficulties and four of the children were reported to be receiving external help from professionals. One child was reported to be about to move house, and school, again. These findings suggested that thorough induction and departure plans should be devised and used to ensure smooth transitions for Service Children, including meeting with parents and student before the transition is made, to understand the family's situation and potential needs, and to exchange any relevant information before the child officially begins. The findings of this study are consistent with other research. For example, Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012), found that Service Children whom experience frequent transitions between schools and Local Authorities, show less social and emotional development, including poor conflict resolution and poor self-awareness. Furthermore, it was suggested that the deployment of parents in the Army increases the child's anxiety levels, which may or may not be supported by schools. The impact of pupil mobility on the individual Army child has been discussed, however research has also been conducted on how mobility may affect other pupils in the class, both Army and non-Army children Dobson, Henthorne and Lynas (2000) found that high pupil mobility has a negative effect on schools, specifically, low pupil attendance, high classroom disruption and consequently, less time for teachers to focus on pupil academic needs.

In a general school sample, it has been suggested that transferring schools may impact on the academic progress of pupils (Galton *et al.,* 1999). However, although previous research has indicated a negative impact on attainment as a result of transfer, Strand and Demie (2007) suggested that these studies have not taken other factors related to attainment into account.

The results of the study conducted by Strand (2002) indicated that mobile primary school pupils have lower attainment than those who have experienced stable schooling, however mobility was also associated with background factors such as low income and poor attendance. When controlling for other factors, it was suggested that the progress achieved in mathematics, in comparison with reading and writing, by mobile primary school pupils was lower than that of stable pupils (Strand, 2002). As such, the importance of ensuring progress in mathematics for pupils who experience transfer was highlighted.

In contrast, the impact of mobility for secondary school pupils has been suggested to affect attainment negatively even when background factors are considered (Strand & Demie, 2007). It was suggested that difficulties may arise after transferring in secondary school due to adjusting to different rules and a more complex curriculum than that in primary school. Consequently, the use of time and resources to integrate the pupil and provide support were emphasised, highlighting the need for appropriate procedures to manage transfers. However, a limitation of this study was that it did not account for the number of times a pupil has moved school.

The number of times a pupil moves schools may influence their academic progress, with a higher number of transfers being associated with lower attainment (Gibbons & Telhaj, 2007), and this increased mobility may also be associated with a sense of '*social defeat*' (Singh *et al.,* 2014). Furthermore, the timing of the transfer may also affect attainment, with transfers occurring later in the academic year affecting attainment more than transferring earlier in the year. However, Gibbons and Telhaj (2007) suggested that although pupils may find transferring schools disruptive, it may not be a cause of low attainment, and if the transition is well-managed, the impact on attainment may not be affected (Ofsted, 2011).

The results of the above studies generally suggest a negative impact on Service Children; however there are some studies that have reported positive effects of the educational experience of Service Children. Farrell-Wright (2011) for example, aimed to examine the experiences of women, whose husbands had been deployed overseas, and how this impacts on their children. The findings suggested that mothers believe that deployment of fathers affect the children both positively and negatively. Positive impacts were described as prompting beneficial behaviour changes and to enable the child to develop in more positive aspects of their

personality, as well as increased thoughtfulness and ability to empathise, while negative effects included a consistent feeling of loss and increased negative emotional states.

Similarly, O'Donnell and Rudd (2007) aimed to explore the parents' satisfaction of their Service Child's education. Having recruited a total of 2,902 parents of children in both primary and secondary schools, the study concluded that parents reported feeling very positive about the schools that their children are attending, and the quality of education that they are receiving. Parents were asked to suggest ways of improving their child's school and education; the top response for primary school was 'better communication with parents', while the top response for secondary school was to 'improve school policies (e.g. healthy eating, behaviour policies)'.

While the research literature is lacking and currently presents inconsistent evidence on the educational attainment and experiences, an emerging body of policy documentation is highlighting the need to support Service Pupils. Key aspects of UK Government policy outline key recommendations for supporting Service Pupils in UK Schools. Such policy recommendations are summarised in Appendix ii and include:

- *The Nation's Commitment: Cross Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans* (Ministry of Defence, 2008) describes the need to prevent any disadvantage which may occur through Military Service, including the educational attainment of the children of those in the armed forces. As such, the Service Premium was introduced in 2011, with the aim of supporting the pastoral needs of the children of service personnel. Outlined in the *Raising the Achievements of Disadvantaged Children Policy*, (Department of Education, 2013) the premium offers support through the provision of funding to schools, at the amount of £300 per eligible pupil, which is assessed on the individual child's needs.
- *The Armed Forces Covenant* (Ministry of Defence, 2008) outlines the government's commitment to the families of Service men and women, stating that the service pupil premium will be used to address any disadvantage. Including ensuring that school admissions guidance does not put Service personnel at a disadvantage when acquiring the school of their choice and also that the needs of Service Children relating to education and childcare will be recognised.

- *The Community Covenant* (Ministry of Defence, 2013) also encourages the support of Service Children. The covenant aims to promote understanding, awareness and support for the service community within the local community. *Her Majesty's School Heroes* is one such example of a national support group for Service Children and young people. It offers after-school clubs and a voice to Service Children, from pre-school to the age of 18 years old, with the intention of providing emotional support and the opportunity to become advocates for Service families. Similarly, *Service Children's Education,* is part of the Ministry of Defence Directorate of Children and Young People and provides an educational service tailored to the needs of the children of Service personnel, MOD civilians and Gurkhas. The aim of the agency is to provide equivalent education services overseas to that in the UK and has produced publications detailing the education of Service Children.
- The Joint Service Publication 342 (Revised 2000) – *The Education of Service Children* provides guidance for service personnel on information on topics such as the categories of school, stages of schooling, the national curriculum, assessment, admissions, exclusion and SEN.
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Research Aims

The findings of these research studies and key policy agendas collectively emphasise the need to conduct further research around not only the Service child as an individual, but how high pupil mobility affects the school and other pupils' educational experiences. Therefore the aim of this project will be to determine how Army children's attainment compares with children from other walks of life in both primary and secondary schools. In particular, this study will explore the following research questions:

- On average, how does the educational attainment of Army children compare to matched peers?
- What are the school experiences of Army children?
- What are teachers' perceptions of the experiences of Army children? Do teachers perceive these experiences to affect attainment? Do they feel that Army children reach their potential?
- What are Army parents' perceptions of their child's experiences of schools? Do parents perceive these experiences to affect attainment? Do they feel that their children reach their potential?

Project A: Pupil Attainment and Educational Experience

Objectives

- To compare the educational attainment of Army year 6 primary school pupils with matched non-Army pupil peers.
- To compare the educational attainment of Army year 10 and year 11 secondary school pupils with matched non-Army pupil peers.
- To explore the educational experiences of year 6 Army Pupils.
- To explore the educational experiences of year 10 and year 11 army pupils.

Method

Survey Tool

Two surveys, one for year 6 pupils and one for year 10 and 11 pupils were developed, with the year 6 survey being a shortened, simplified version of the year 10 and 11 survey. The surveys were designed for the purposes of the project to explore pupil's friendships, enjoyment of school, well-being and pupil's beliefs about their ability to succeed at school. Questions were also asked about the number of times a pupil had moved school in order to assess mobility and their experiences of transition. The year 6 survey consisted of a combination of 31 open and closed questions, the year 10 and 11 survey consisted of 44 questions. The initial draft questionnaire was piloted with a small group of adolescents and edited in line with the feedback received. The questions were developed based on previous research and following discussions with Army families, teachers and children and young people.

Participants

In total, 102 year 10 and 11 secondary school pupils and 42 year 6 pupils were matched on school attended, family structure, gender and age and were included in the study. 21 Year 6 Army pupils were matched to 21 pupils without a parent/s in the Army, from this point forward termed Non-Army pupils. In terms of the year 10 and 11 sample, 51 pupils with a parent/s in the Army were matched to 51 pupils without a parent/s in the Army, from this point forward termed Non-Army pupils.

Demographic information on the sample is shown in Table 1.

Procedure

A map of all Army bases within England and Wales was drawn up and all schools in the areas surrounding these bases were contacted (203 primary and secondary schools in total). Four primary schools and eight secondary schools agreed to participant in the project and therefore both army and non-army pupils were recruited through these schools. Parental consent for pupil participation was gained and a survey link subsequently distributed to the schools. Pupils completed the survey during lesson time or form/registration time.

Attainment data of the pupils participating in the project was also gained through the schools. SAT predicted grades for English, Maths and Science were obtained for year 6 pupils and GCSE/BTEC predicted grades for the core subjects of English, Maths and Science were collected for year 10 and 11 pupils. GCSE and BTEC predicted grades were converted into School and College Achievement and Attainment Table (SCAAT) points, the government system for comparing school performance.

Mann-Whitney U tests were used to analyse the army and non-army attainment data. While thematic analysis was utilised to analyse qualitative responses.

Table 1: Demographic Information on Sample

	Year 6 Army	Year 6 Non-Army	Year 10 & 11 Army	Year 10 & 11 Non-Army
Gender				
Male	11 (52.4%)	11 (52.4%)	25 (49%)	26 (51%)
Female	10 (47.6%)	10 (47.6%)	26 (51%)	25 (49%)
Age				
10	11 (52.4%)	11 (52.4%)	-	-
11	10 (47.6%)	10 (47.6%)	-	-
14	-	-	12 (23.5%)	17 (33.3%)
15	-	-	31 (60.8%)	29 (56.9%)
16	-	-	8 (15.7%)	5 (9.8%)

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Results: Attainment Data

Additional Demographic Data

As part of the survey, pupils were asked whether they had a special educational need or disability and also whether they received free school meals. As table 2 shows, a higher proportion of Army pupils in the Year 6 and in the Year 10 & 11 samples reported having a special educational need or disability, compared to Non-Army Pupils. In the Year 6 sample, fewer Army pupils reported receiving free school meals. However, in the Year 10 & 11 sample a higher proportion of Army pupils reported receiving free school meals.

Table 2: Additional Details on the Sample

	Year 6 Army	Year 6 Non-Army	Year 10 & 11 Army	Year 10 & 11 Non-Army
Special Educational Needs				
Yes	5 (23.8%)	1 (4.8%)	5 (9.8%)	2 (3.9%)
No	12 (57.1%)	18 (85.7%)	42 (82.4%)	90.2%)
Don't Know	4 (19%)	2 (9.5%)	3 (5.9%)	2 (3.9%)
Have you a Learning Support Officer this year				
Yes	9 (42.9%)	2 (9.5%)	10 (19.6%)	3 (5.9%)
No	8 (38.1%)	15 (71.4%)	40 (78.4%)	48 (94.1%)
Don't Know	4 (19%	4 (19%)	-	-
Free School Meals				
Yes	0	5 (23.8%)	3 (5.9%)	0
No	20 (95.2%)	16 (76.2%)	47 (92.2%)	50 (98%)
Don't Know	1 (4.8%)	0	0	1 (2%)

Year 10 & 11 Pupil Attainment Data

As part of the school survey, schools were asked to provide pupil attainment data for English, Maths and Science. This section of the report presents these data. Due to the lack of response from primary schools, there was insufficient data provided on pupil attainment and therefore only data for year 10 and 11 pupils are presented. Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics for English, Maths and Science attainment data. As this table shows attainment scores for Maths and Science, were similar for both Army and Non-Army pupils. However, the mean English attainment score for Non-Army pupils was slightly higher compared to Army pupils.

Table 3: Year 10 and 11 Pupil Attainment Data for English, Maths and Science

		Lowest	Highest	Mean (SD)	Median
English GCSE/ BTEC	Y10/11 Army	28	58	39.8 (5.2)	40
	Y10/11 Non-Army	28	52	41.4 (5.3)	40
Maths GCSE/ BTEC	Y10/11 Army	28	58	39.5 (5.9)	40
	Y10/11 Non-Army	28	58	40.4 (5.8)	40
Science GCSE/ BTEC	Y10/11 Army	28	58	39.2 (4.9)	40
	Y10/11 Non-Army	28	58	40.7 (5.6)	40

As the attainment data for the English, Maths and Science attainment data were found to be non-normally distributed, differences between the Army and Non-Army pupils were examined with Mann-Whitney U tests. In terms of the English attainment scores, a significant difference and small effect was found; $U=1016.0$, $n_1=51$, $n_2=51$, $p<0.05$, $d=0.40$. No significant differences were found for Maths or Science attainment scores.

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Results: Pupil Survey

The results of the pupils' survey will be presented by section and will present the results for the 42 Primary School Pupils (21 Army and 21 Non-Army Pupils) and for the 102 Year 10 and 11 Secondary School pupils (51 Army and 51 Non-Army Pupils).

Opinion of the standard of school work

As figure 1 shows a higher proportion of Non-Army Year 6 pupils reported that they felt the standard of their school work was *good* and a slightly higher proportion of Army Year 6 pupils reported that their school work was *not very good*.

Table 4 provides the results of the survey exploring Year 6 pupils' opinions of their engagement with their schoolwork and the level of support they feel they receive. As this table shows:

- Fewer Army Pupils, compared to Non-Army Pupils agreed with the statement that they *try their best in school*
- A lower proportion of Army Pupils compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they agreed with the statement that they *learn a lot in school*.
- A higher proportion of Army pupils reported that they disagreed with the statement that they *enjoy school*.
- A lower proportion of Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they agreed with the statement *I get enough help with learning*.

Figure 1: Y6 Pupil reports of the standard of their school work

	It's Good	It's ok	It's not very good
Y6 Army	33.3	57.1	4.8
Y6 Non-Army	66.7	33.3	0
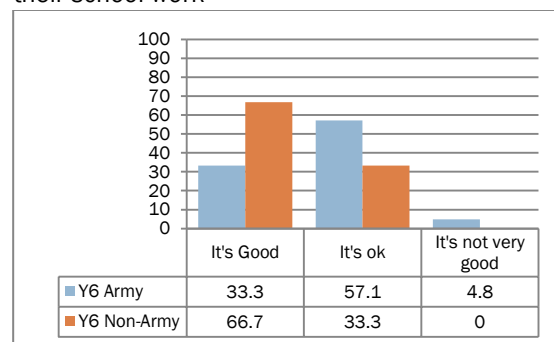
Table 4: Y6 opinions of their School Work and Engagement in School

	Agree		Sometimes		Disagree	
	Y6 Army	Y6 Non-Army	Y6 Army	Y6 Non-Army	Y6 Army	Y6 Non-Army
I try my best at school	11 (52.4%)	14 (66.7%)	10 (47.6%)	7 (33.3%)	0	0
I learn a lot at school	11 (52.4%)	17 (81%)	9 (42.9%)	4 (19%)	0	0
I enjoy school	6 (28.6%)	8 (38.1%)	11 (52.4%)	12 (57.1%)	4 (19%)	1 (4.8%)
I work really hard at my school work	14 (66.7%)	14 (66.7%)	7 (33.3%)	6 (28.6%)	0	1 (4.8%)
I work really hard at my homework	10 (47.6%)	12 (57.1%)	9 (42.9%)	6 (28.6%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)
I get enough help with learning	10 (47.6%)	16 (76.2%)	8 (38.1%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)

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Opinion of the standard of school work

In terms of the Year 10 and 11 pupils opinions of their school work and engagement in school, and as Figure 2 and Table 5 show:

- A slightly higher proportion of Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported that their schoolwork was *Usually Poor* and *Always Poor.*
- A slightly lower proportion of Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they *strongly agreed* with the statement *I try my best in school.*
- A higher proportion Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported strongly agreeing with the statement *I feel I am reaching my potential with my school work*
- A higher proportion of Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported strongly agreeing with the statement *I work really hard at my school work.* However, a lower proportion on Army pupils reported strongly agreeing with the statement *I work really hard at my homework.*

Figure 2: Y10 & 11 Pupil reports of the standard of their school work

	Always Good	Usually Good	Sometimes good/poor	Usually Poor	Always Poor
Y10 & 11 Army	15.7	52.9	25.5	2	2
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	15.7	49	35.3	0	0
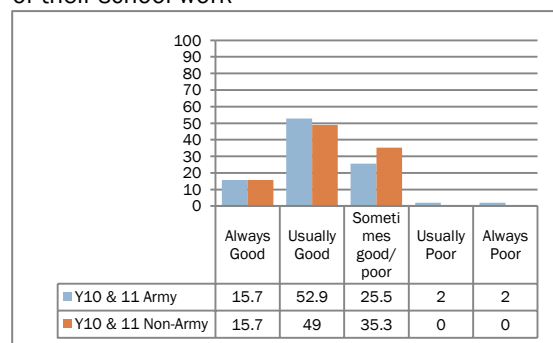
Table 5: Y10 & Y11 opinions of their School Work and Engagement in School

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither Agree Disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Y10 & 11 Army	Y10 & 11 Non-Army	Y10 & 11 Army	Y10 & 11 Non-Army	Y10 & 11 Army	Y10 & 11 Non-Army	Y10 & 11 Army	Y10 & 11 Non-Army	Y10 & 11 Army	Y10 & 11 Non-Army
I try my best at school	14 (27.5%)	17 (33.3%)	30 (58.8%)	26 (51%)	5 (9.8%)	8 (15.7%)	1 (2%)	0	0	0
I learn a lot at school	4 (7.8%)	6 (11.8%)	30 (58.8%)	34 (66.7%)	12 (23.5%)	11 (21.6%)	4 (7.8%)	0	0	0
I feel I am reaching my potential with my school work	6 (11.8%)	2 (3.9%)	21 (41.2%)	25 (49%)	12 (23.5%)	17 (33.3%)	9 (17.6%)	6 (11.8%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
I work really hard at my school work	12 (23.5%)	10 (19.6%)	25 (49%)	25 (49%)	12 (23.5%)	14 (27.5%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	0	0
I work really hard at my homework	5 (9.8%)	7 (13.7%)	17 (33.3%)	15 (29.4%)	18 (35.3%)	17 (33.3%)	8 (15.7%)	9 (17.6%)	2 (3.9%)	3 (5.9%)
I get enough help with learning	3 (5.9%)	6 (11.8%)	24 (47.1%)	18 (35.3%)	15 (29.4%)	17 (33.3%)	7 (13.7%)	7 (13.7%)	1 (2%)	3 (5.9%)

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Future Aspirations

The survey for Year 10 and 11 pupils explore their aspirations for the future and what they would like to do once they have finished school. A lower proportion of Army pupils compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they would like to continue in full time education. In comparison, a higher proportion of Army pupils reported that they would like to get a job.

Figure 3: Y10 & 11 Pupil reports of their future aspirations

	Continue in Full Time Education	Get a Job	Start Apprenticeship	Other
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	78.4	9.8	7.8	3.9
Y10 & 11 Army	66.7	19.6	5.9	3.9
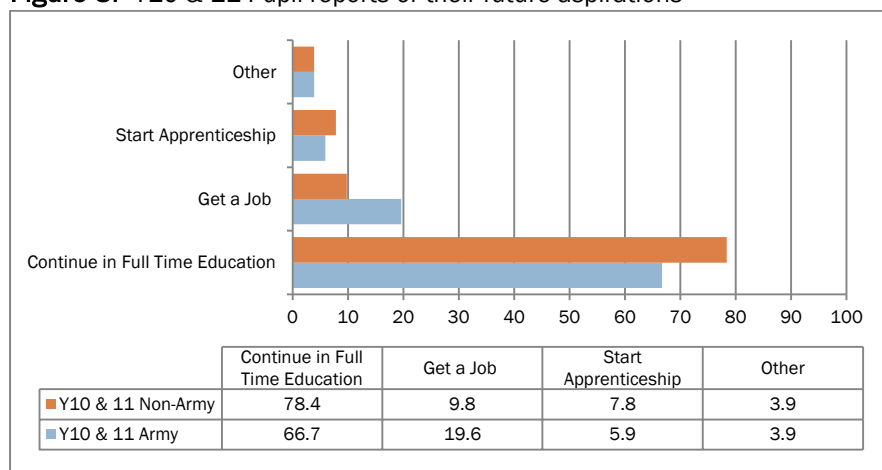
Pupils were given the opportunity to expand on their answer if they chose to. Four Non-Army pupils responded to this:
- Two Non-Army pupils reported that they would like to join the forces
- One Non-Army pupils reported that they would like to be a police woman
- One pupil reported that they wanted to take a gap year.

Six Army pupils responded to the opportunity to expand on their answer:
- One Army pupil reported that they would like to be an electrician
- One Army pupil reported that they would like to *get a job for money but would also like to go to college.*
- One Army Pupils reported that they would like to go into hairdressing at college.
- Three Army pupils reported they wanted to join the Army.

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Number of Schools Attended

The primary and secondary school surveys asked pupils about their experiences of moving schools. The results of these questions are shown in Figures 4 to 6. As these figures show:

- A higher proportion of Year 6 Army Pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they had moved primary schools twice or more.
- A slightly higher proportion of Year 10 and 11 reported moving secondary school two or more times.
- Overall, 42 Army pupils reported having attended three or more schools, compared to 18 Non-Army pupils.

Figure 4: Number of times Year 6 pupils reported moving primary schools

	No	Once	Twice	Three Times +
Y6 Army	14.3	19	33.3	33.3
Y6 Non-Army	76.2	19	4.8	0
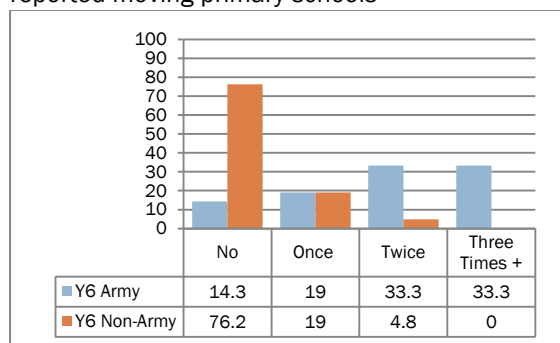
Figure 5: Number of times Year 10 and 11 Pupils report having moved secondary school

	No	Once	Twice	Three Times	Four Times	Five Times +
Y10 & 11 Army	54.9	31.4	9.8	2	0	0
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	92.9	3.9	2	0	0	0
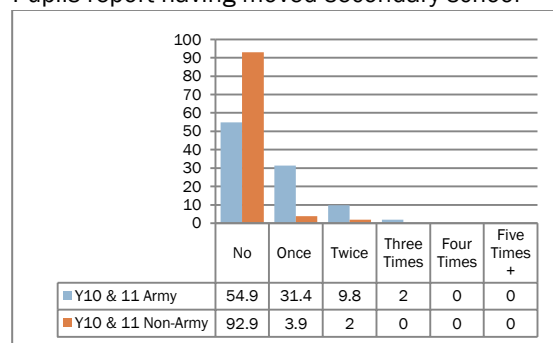
Figure 6: Year 10 and 11 Pupils reports of the total number of schools attended

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y10 & 11 Army	0	8	11	13	7	5	4	2	0	0
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	0	32	15	1	2	0	0	0	0	0

Y10 & 11 Army   Y10 & 11 Non-Army

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils
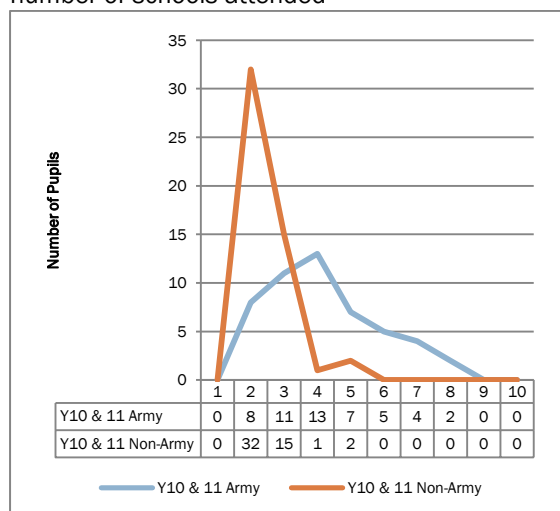
Transition & the Process of Changing Schools

The school surveys also explored pupils' experiences and opinions of moving school. The questions were phrased slightly differently in the primary and secondary surveys. The results to these questions are shown in Figures 6 and 7 and below. As these figures show:

- A higher proportion of Year 6 Army Pupils compared to Non-Army Pupils reported liking moving school. The majority of Year 6 Army pupils viewed moving school positively rather than negatively.
- The majority of Year 10 and 11 Army pupils reported that it took *a few weeks* to settle into a new school. A higher proportion of Non-Army pupils compared to Army Pupils reported settling into a new school in *a few days.*

Figure 6: Year 6 pupils' opinions of Moving School

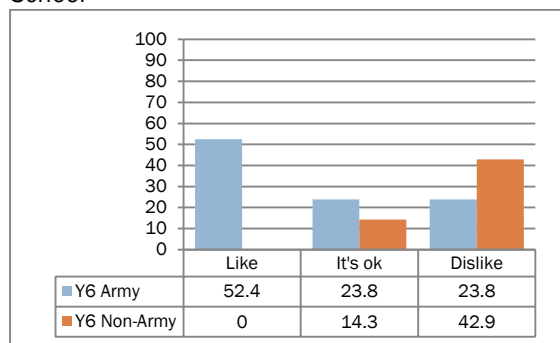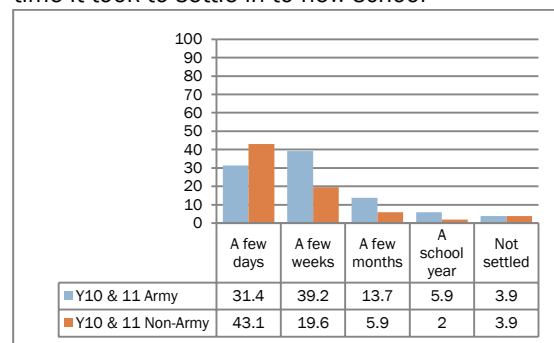|	Like	It's ok	Dislike
Y6 Army	52.4	23.8	23.8
Y6 Non-Army	0	14.3	42.9

Figure 7: Year 10 and 11 pupils' reports on the time it took to settle in to new school

	A few days	A few weeks	A few months	A school year	Not settled
Y10 & 11 Army	31.4	39.2	13.7	5.9	3.9
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	43.1	19.6	5.9	2	3.9

Year 6 primary school pupils were provided with the opportunity to provide more detail on their experiences of moving school. Four pupils responded, two Army and two Non-Army pupils and all the comments were related to the difficulties pupils face when leaving behind friends and having to make new friends. As one Army pupil stated; ' *I don't like it because when you settle into one place and make friends you have to move to a different place and make new friends where they might not be as nice or if you do make friends in a group you might not feel like they like you'.*

Year 10 and 11 pupils were asked whether anything could be done to help make moving schools easier, and whether there was anything in particular that made moving schools particularly difficult. Overall, 16 (31.4%) of Year 10 and 11 Army pupils compared to 6 (11.8%) of Year 10 and 11 Non-Army pupils reported that there was something that could have been done to make moving school easier. When given the opportunity to expand on their answer, Army pupils included:

- Coming back to the UK
- Being able to move with friend , as one pupil stated; *'I moved with a friend that I already knew so I didn't have to start on my own'*
- Having got used to moving and having previous knowledge of the area, as one pupil stated; '*I have had experience and knew a few people already'*.

Overall, 13 (25.5%) of Year 10 and 11 Army pupils, compared to 2 (3.9%) of Year 10 and 11 Non-Army pupils reported that something had happened that made moving schools more difficult. When given the opportunity to expand on their answer, no Non-Army pupils provided any additional detail, however seven Army pupils responded and responses included:

- Leaving the UK and going abroad
- Leaving friends behind and having to make new friends, as two pupils stated '*having to fit in and make new friends*' and '*I had to leave all of my friends every two years or so*'.
- Difficulties with differences in curricula, as one pupil stated: *'having to cover subjects all over again and having gaps on subjects that had already been taught at my new school, but I hadn't learnt yet in my old school'*.

School curriculum

The school surveys asked pupils if they had ever been taught something more than once. As figures 8 and 9 show:

- A higher proportion of Army pupils reported having been taught something more than once, compared to non-army pupils.

Pupils were given the opportunity to expand on their answer. 12 Year 6 Army pupils and 8 Year 10 and 11 Army pupils provided more detail to their response. Such responses included comments regarding:

- History: Three Year 6 Army Pupils and six Year 10 and 11 Army Pupils reported having been taught about the same thing more than once regarding History.
- Maths: Four Year 6 Army pupils and three Year 10 and 11 Army pupils reported having studied aspects of maths more than once. As one primary school pupil stated: *'In math were* [sic] *I used to live we did much harder maths so I know most of the work we do here'*.
- Science: three Year 6 Army pupils and six Year 10 and 11 Army pupils reported having studied aspects of the science curriculum more than once.

The secondary school survey also asked Year 10 and 11 pupils about whether they were able to continue to study the same G.C.S.E. subjects if they had to move schools during their G.C.S.E.'s. The majority of Army Pupils reported that they had not moved during this time (80.4%). However, 5.9% reported that they were not able to continue with the same subjects and 7.8% reported that the topics they are studying in their GCSE subjects are different compared to their previous school.

Figure 8: Year 6 pupil reports of having being taught something more than once.

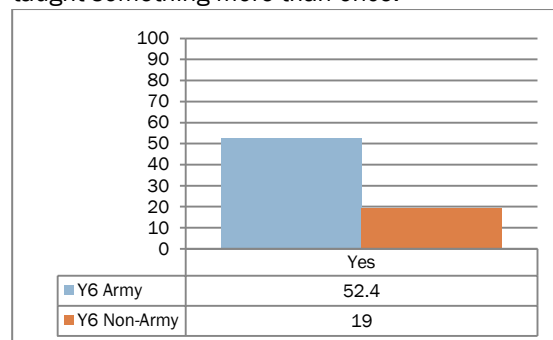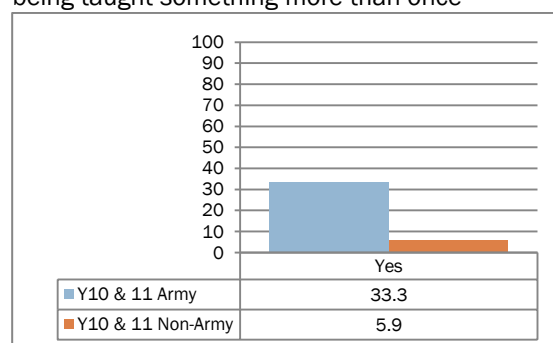|	Yes
Y6 Army	52.4
Y6 Non-Army	19

Figure 9: Year 10 and 11 pupil reports of having being taught something more than once

	Yes
Y10 & 11 Army	33.3
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	5.9

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Both the primary and secondary school surveys asked pupils about their peer relationships and reports of whether they like school. This section of the report will present the results of these questions.

Liking School

Overall, as Figures 10 and 11 show:

- An equal proportion of Year 6 Army and Non-Army pupils reported *always* liking school. However, a slightly higher proportion of Army pupils reported *never* liking school.
- Fewer Year 10 and 11 Army Pupils compared to Non-Army pupils reported *always* liking school. However, fewer Year 10 and 11 Army pupils also reported *never* liking school. The majority of Army pupils reported *usually*, or *sometimes* liking school.

Liking Break times

As figures 12 and 13 show:

- Overall, fewer Year 6 Army pupils reported liking break times compared to Non-Army pupils. A higher proportion of Year 6 Army pupils compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they *did not like break times very much*.
- A higher proportion of Year 10 and 11 Army pupils reported liking break times. No Year 10 and 11 Army pupils reported disliking break times to any extent.

Figure 10: Y6 Pupil reports of liking school

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Not Usually	Never
Y6 Army	14.3	28.6	38.1	14.3	4.8
Y6 Non-Army	14.3	57.1	14.3	9.5	0

Figure 12: Y6 Pupil reports of liking break times

	A Lot	It's OK	Not Very Much
Y6 Army	38.1	38.1	23.8
Y6 Non-Army	47.6	42.9	4.8

Figure 11: Y10 & 11 Pupil reports of liking school

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Not Usually	Never
Y10 & 11 Army	3.9	33.3	39.2	17.6	5.9
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	9.8	29.4	47.1	3.9	7.8
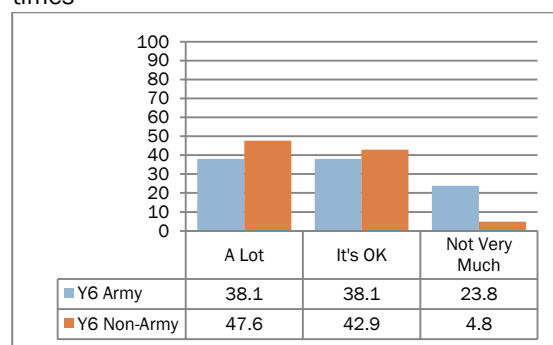
Figure 13: Y10 & 11 Pupil reports of liking break times

	Like Very Much	Like Very Much	Like Somewhat	Neither	Dislike somewhat	Dislike	Dislike very much
Y10 & 11 Army	35.3	37.3	11.8	15.7	0	0	0
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	31.4	37.3	9.8	13.7	2	2	2

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils
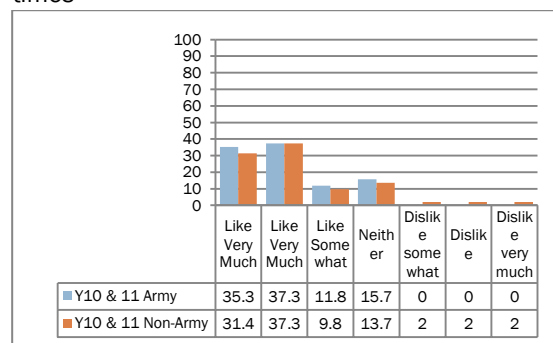
Number of good friends

The school surveys explored the number of friends pupils report having in school. As figures 14 and 15 show:

- A lower proportion of Year 6 Army pupils reported having *a lot* of friends compared to Non-Army pupils. A slightly higher proportion of Army pupils reported having no friends in school/
- In terms of the secondary data, a slightly higher proportion of Year 10 and 11 Army pupils reported having no friends compared to Non-Amy pupils.

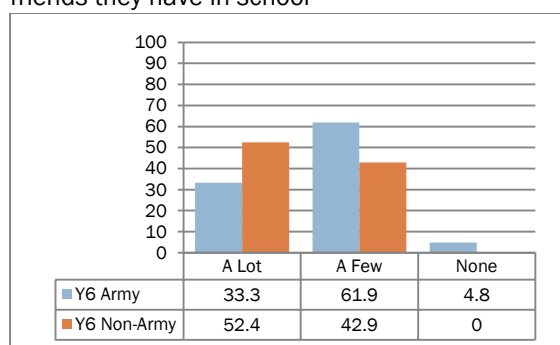**Figure 14:** Y6 Pupil reports of the number of friends they have in school

	A Lot	A Few	None
Y6 Army	33.3	61.9	4.8
Y6 Non-Army	52.4	42.9	0

Figure 15: Y10 & 11 Pupil reports of the number of friends they have in school

	None	1 good friend	2 or 3 good friends	4 or 5 good friends	Many good friends
Y10 & 11 Army	3.9	0	27.5	23.5	43.1
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	2	3.9	21.6	23.5	49
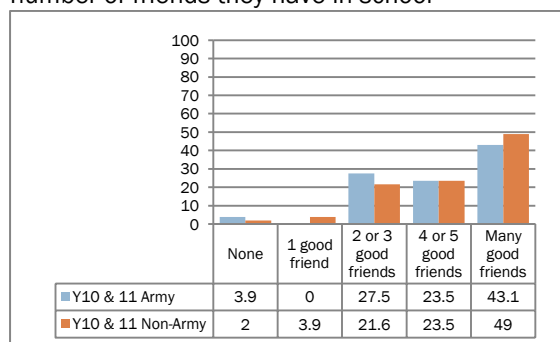
Reports of Feeling Lonely in School

Regarding feeling lonely in school and as Figures 16 and 17 show:

- Fewer Year 6 Army pupils reported *never* feeling lonely in school, compared to Non-Army Pupils. Conversely, a higher proportion of Army pupils reported *sometimes* and *often* feeling lonely in school.
- In terms of the Year 10 and 11 pupils, fewer Army pupils reported *never* feeling lonely in school. A slightly higher proportion of Army pupils reported feeling lonely in school *very often* and a higher proportion of Non-Army pupils reported feeling lonely *fairly often*.

Figure 16: Y6 Pupil reports of feeling lonely in school.

	Never	Yes, sometimes	Yes, Often
Y6 Army	33.3	57.1	9.5
Y6 Non-Army	66.7	28.6	0
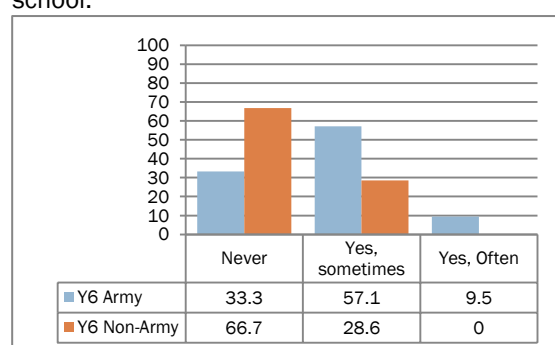
Figure 17: Y10 & 11 Pupil reports of feeling lonely in school.

	No, never	Yes, once in a while	Now and then	Fairly often	Very often
Y10 & 11 Army	49	27.5	17.6	0	3.9
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	58.8	15.7	19.6	5.9	0
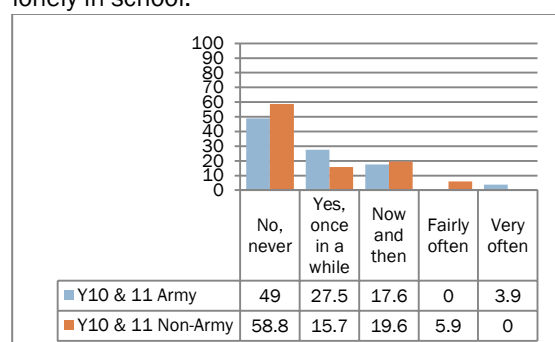
Worries, concerns and social support

The Secondary School survey asked Year 10 and 11 pupils whether there was anything they were currently worried about and whether they had anyone to talk to about their worried and concerns. As figures 18 and 19 show:

- A similar proportion of Army and Non-Army pupils reported currently being worried about something.
- A higher proportion of Non-Army pupils reported having *no-one* to talk to about their worries and concerns. A higher proportion of Army pupils reported being able to talk to someone at home or someone at school about their worries and concerns.

Pupils were provided with the opportunity to expand on their answer and provide more detail on their current worries and concerns. 10 Non-Army and 13 Army pupils provided more detail on their current concerns:

- 9 of the Non-Army pupils reported concerns related to school work and exams and 1 Non-Army pupil reported currently being worried about their friends having a disagreement.
- 9 Army pupils reported currently being worried about their school work and exams. Two Army pupils reported concerns relating to their family life and two pupils reported general non-specific concerns regarding *life*.

Figure 18: Y10 & 11 Pupil reports on whether they are currently worried about anything

	No	Yes
Y10 & 11 Army	70.6	27.5
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	70.6	25.5
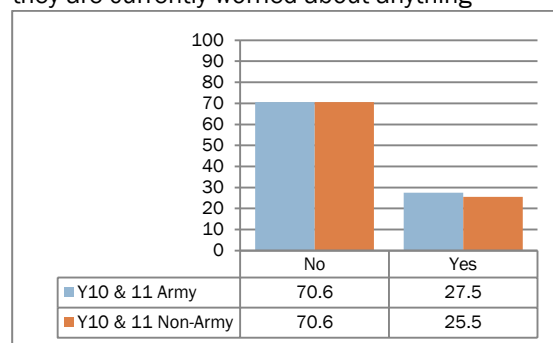
Figure 19: Y10 & 11 Pupil reports on whether they have someone to talk to about their concerns

	No-One	Someone at school	Someone at home
Y10 & 11 Army	21.6	39.2	60.8
Y10 & 11 Non-Army	27.5	27.5	54.9

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils
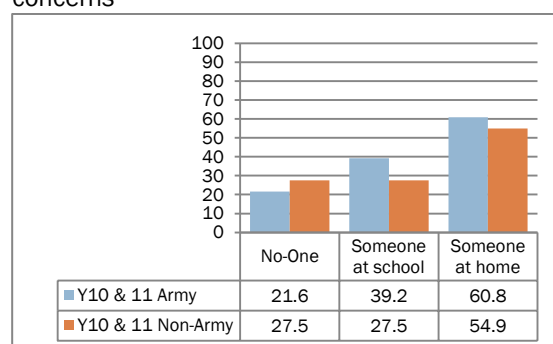
Army Life

The school surveys asked pupils specific questions about their Army lives. The following section of the report focuses on the responses to these questions.

Year 10 and 11 Army pupils were asked whether their parent/ carer had been away on operations in the last month, 29.4% (n=15) of Army pupils reported that they had.

Year 6 Army and Year 10 and 11 pupils were asked whether there was anyone in school they could talk to while their parent/ carer was away on operations. As Figure 20 shows:

- A higher proportion of Year 6 compared to Year 10 and 11 Army pupils reported there being someone in school to talk to.
- A higher proportion of Year 10 and 11 pupils reported that there was not anyone in school to talk to.

The schools surveys asked pupils whether there were any dedicated activities for Army pupils, as Figure 20 shows, a higher proportion of Year 6 Army pupils reported there being such activities compared to Year 10 and 11 pupils. Pupils were given the opportunity to expand on their answer:

- Year 6 pupils highlighted a Forces Club being available and also Pupil Support.
- In terms of Year 10 and 11 pupils, two Army pupils highlighted the 'Young Soldiers' support group. However one pupil suggested that such support groups were not always a supportive experience '*there used to be* (dedicated activities)*, at lunch times, but they wasn't much help as they made me think about it and made me more upset and worried*'.

Figure 20: Pupil reports of having someone to talk to in school about their parent/ carer being in the Army

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Y6 Army	42.9	28.6	28.6
Y10 & 11 Army	27.5	49	17.6
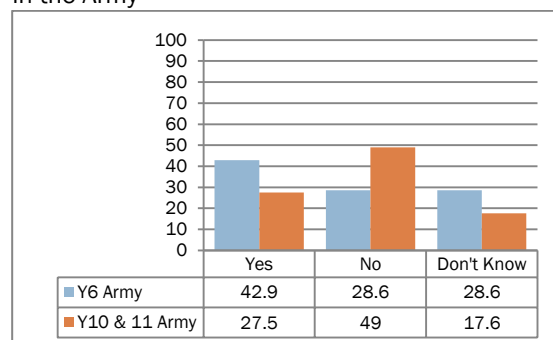
Figure 20: Pupil reports of having dedicated activities for Army pupils in school

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Y6 Army	38.1	19	42.9
Y10 & 11 Army	9.8	52.9	31.4

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils
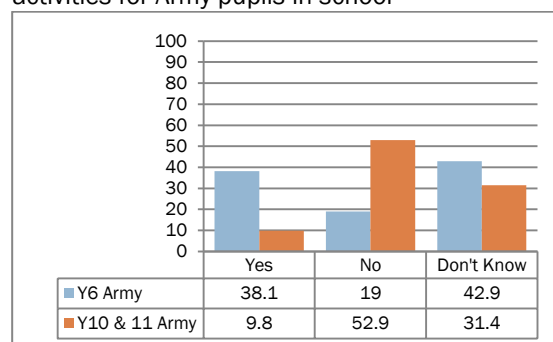
Army Life

Pupils were asked to provide more information on what it was like for them while their parent was away on operations. In total eight Year 6 Army pupils and 33 Year 10 and 11 pupils provided a response to this question.

In terms of responses from the primary school pupils, all of the eight pupils' responses focused around missing their parent while they are away. One pupil highlighted the differences for Army pupils and how other pupils don't understand their experiences; '*people complain all the time about their parents being so stupid or something like that but they've never really gone through what army kids have gone through like one of my friends complained that their dad was away for a night but my dad was in Afghanistan'*. In addition, one pupil highlighted how difficult it can be for the other parent/ carer; '*I don't like being away from my dad my mum has to take special pills so she doesn't cry and I cry all the time because I miss him'*.

Regarding responses from Year 10 and 11 pupils, seven pupils described the experience as *difficult, hard* and *stressful.* Five pupils referred to how much they missed their parent while they are away on operations however two pupils also stated how they '*get used to it'* over time. Five pupils reported feeling *worried* and *scared*, as one pupil stated; '*it is quite scary because when my dad went to Afghanistan I didn't know if he would come back because he was on tour in Helmand Province*'. Three pupils reported how they have to take on additional work in their home; '*I have to help around the house more and look after my mum and sister as much as I can'*. Additional responses from Year 10 pupils were not detailed but included feeling *fine, weird* and *scary.*

Key Points for Consideration

Findings from the pupil survey and attainment data highlight some key issues for Army pupils in school:

- A significant difference was found in Year 10 and 11 English attainment scores, with Army pupils performing significantly lower in English compared to Non-Army pupils. No significant differences were found in Maths and Science attainment scores.
- A lower proportion of Year 6 Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they agreed with the statement *I get enough help with learning.*
- A higher proportion Year 10 and 11 Army pupils, compared to Non-Army pupils reported strongly agreeing with the statement *I feel I am reaching my potential with my school work*
- A higher proportion of Year 6 Army Pupils compared to Non-Army Pupils reported liking moving school. The majority of Year 6 Army pupils viewed moving school positively rather than negatively.
- A higher proportion of Army pupils reported having been taught something more than once, compared to non-army pupils.
- 52.4% of Year 6 pupils and 33.3% of Year 10 and 11 Army Pupils reported having studied aspects of the curriculum more than once. The only subjects reported to having been taught more than once were Maths, science and History.
- A higher proportion of Year 6 Army pupils compared to Non-Army pupils reported that they *did not like break times very much.*
- Fewer Year 6 Army pupils reported *never* feeling lonely in school, compared to Non-Army Pupils. Conversely, a higher proportion of Army pupils reported *sometimes* and *often* feeling lonely in school.
- In terms of the Year 10 and 11 pupils, fewer Army pupils reported *never* feeling lonely in school. A slightly higher proportion of Army pupils reported feeling lonely in school *very often* and a higher proportion of Non-Army pupils reported feeling lonely *fairly often.*

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Project B: Parent Survey

Objectives

- To explore Army parents' perceptions of their child's experiences of schools.
- To explore whether parents perceive these experiences to affect attainment.
- To explore whether they feel that their children reaches their potential.

Method

Survey Tool

The parent survey aimed to explore views about the needs and the potential of their child within school, alongside views of their child's school experience. The survey consisted of 16 questions, including a combination of open and closed questions.

Participants

140 Army parents were recruited in total; 25 participants from five primary schools, 11 participants from five secondary schools and 104 from three online Army related forums. All schools were in England and Wales, within the counties of Cheshire, Dorset, Essex, Kent, Lancashire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Yorkshire and Powys.

Procedure

All participants recruited via schools were contacted by letter, either as part of the consent letter for the pupil survey or within a separate letter sent out to parents whose child was not in the selected year group. The letter asked all parents within the Army or with a partner in the Army to complete the survey within their own time. In addition, an advert was placed, with permission, on a number of online forums for Army parents. The forums included:
- Military Forums.co.uk
- The Army Rumour Service (ARRSE)
- Rearparty.co.uk: The online community for armed forces friends and family

The survey link was also posted on the AFF Facebook site. The survey link remained online for approximately four months.

Once data collection had been completed, the data were downloaded and analysed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative responses that were given throughout the survey, to establish any recurring themes.

Results: Parent Survey

The type of school their child attends

Question 5 asked parents what type of school their child attends. Results of this question are shown in chart 21. Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 50% of parents reported that their child attends *a state school*.
- 15.83% of parents reported that their child attends *an independent boarding school*.

To facilitate data analysis by type of school, responses were clustered by type of school attended, as shown in chart 22.

Parents were also asked for their reasons for why they decided to send their child/children to an independent school. A total of 26 parents answered this question, and 3 common themes were identified from these responses. One theme was due to *continuity and stability of their child's education*, with some parents reporting, *"They needed the stability of boarding rather than moving with us", A stable education"* and *"Continuity – my eldest daughter was fed up with moving around and repeating subjects"*.

A second theme was due to *poor educational standards of state schools*, with parents reporting comments such as, *"State schools were huge and over-subscribed and we didn't feel our child would learn much or even get noticed in such environments", "The only place offered to us from the state sector was at a school we found unacceptable"* and *"Poor educational standards of a SCE school and two county primary schools"*.

The final and third theme emerging from the data was identified; *due to their child's social and emotional well-being.* Some parents reported; *"He was tired of saying goodbye to friends and always being the new boy", "The decision was made as much for their emotional well-being as well as their academic progress", "What affected him more was the impact on moving him – he became very quiet and withdrawn, would not undertake any out of school activities"*.

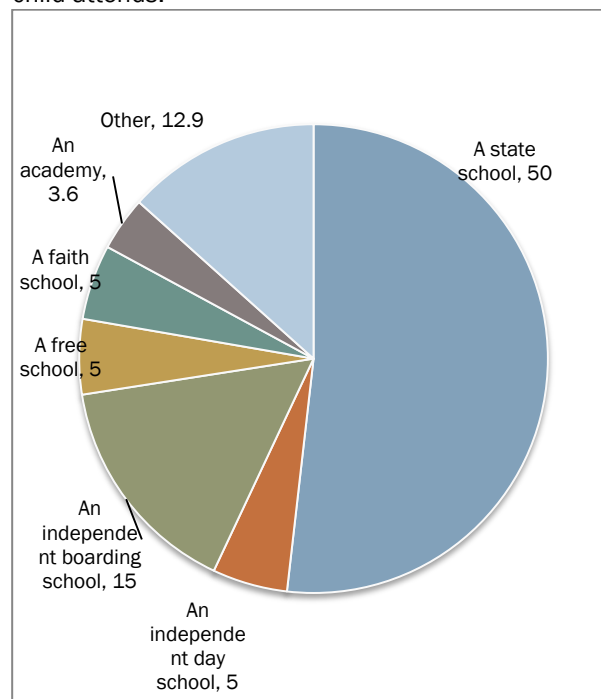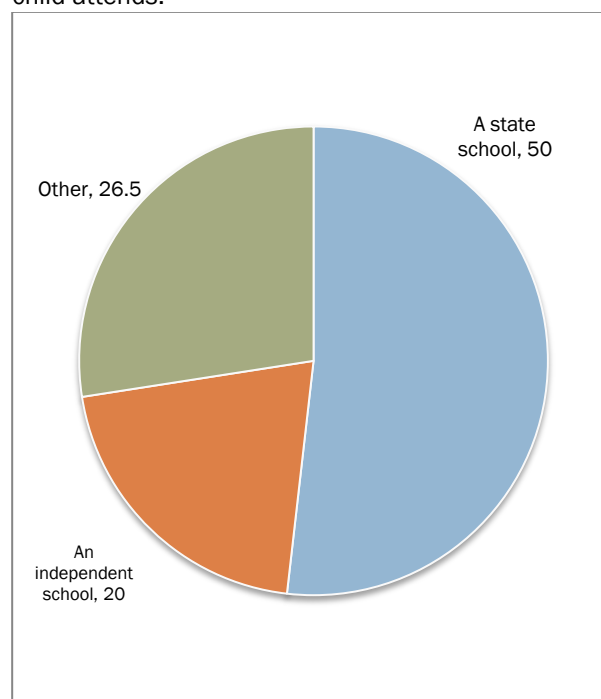**Chart 21:** Parents report the type of school their child attends.

Chart 22: Parents report the type of school their child attends.

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

How many times their child has moved school

As chart 23 shows, overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 15.32% of parents reported that their child has *never* moved school.
- 18.55% of parents reported that their child has moved school *more than five times*.
- None of the parents whose child(ren) went to independent schools reported that their child(ren) had *never* moved school.

Their child's Special Education Needs or Disability

Chart 24 shows the findings of this question showed. Overall:

- 15.8% of parents reported *yes* their child has Special Educational Needs or a Disability.
- 84.6% of parents reported *no* their child does not have Special Educational Needs or a Disability.
- A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend an independent school reported that their child(ren) has a special educational need or disability.

The parents who answered *yes* were asked if they would like to share the nature of their child Special Educational Needs or a Disability. A total of 21 parents expanded on this question, with 3 recurring themes emerging; Dyslexia, Speech and Language problems and Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder, in order of prevalence.

Moving before Special Educational Needs assessment was complete

Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 5.8% of parents reported *yes* they have moved before their child's Special Educational Needs assessment was fully complete.
- 28.9% of parents reported *no* they have not moved before their child's Special Educational Needs assessment was fully complete.

Parents were given the option to expand on their answer. A total of 3 parents expanded on their response, and one theme was identified. This was the *considerable amount of time it took for the Special Educational Needs assessment to be completed*, with one parent saying, "*Many times as it takes so long*", and another saying "*Because I fought to extend in my post at the time to allow the process to be completed*".

Chart 23: Parents report how many times their child has moved school.

	Never	Once	Twice	Three times	Four times	More than five times
Other	18.9	18.9	5.4	18.9	10.8	27
Independent	0	7.1	10.7	17.9	21.4	42.9
State	17.1	24.3	17.1	20	14.36	5.7
Total	15.32	20.16	12.1	18.55	15.32	18.55

%
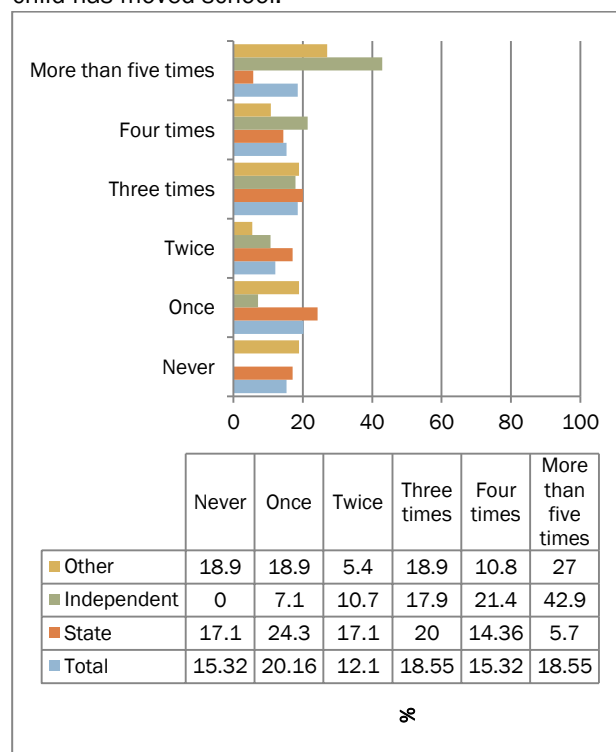
Chart 24: Parents report if their child has Special Educational Needs or a Disability.

	Yes
Total	15.45
State	15.7
Independent	21.4
Other	16.2
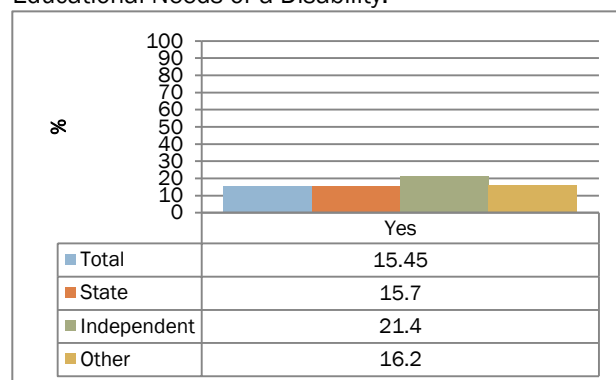
Chart 25: Parents report if they have moved before a Special Educational Needs assessment was complete.

	Yes
Total	5.79
State	5.7
Independent	3.6
Other	8.1

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils
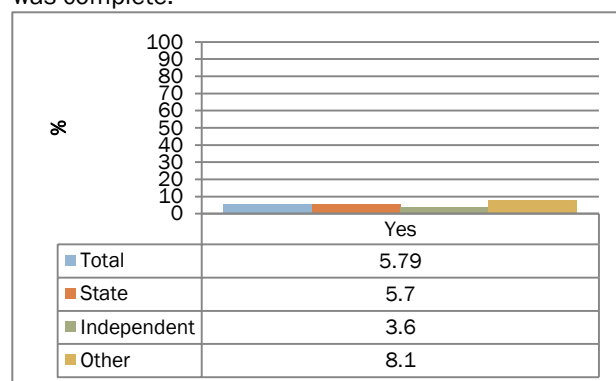
Their child's school experience

Chart 26 shows parent's responses to the question exploring parents' opinions as to whether they think their child has had a positive school experience. As this chart shows:

- 43.48% of parents reported that *yes* they think their child has had a positive school experience, *very much so.*
- 8.7% of parents reported that *no* they think their child has not had a positive school experience.
- Fewer parents' whose child attends a state school responded *no* to the question as to whether their child has had a positive school experience.

The parent survey also asked parents if they believe Army children has additional needs, compared to non-Army children. Results of this question are shown in chart 4.6. Overall, the findings of this question showed:
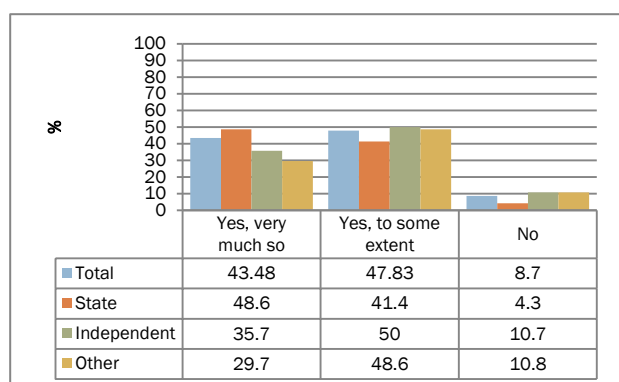
- 67.54% of parents reported *yes*, they believe Army children have additional needs compared to non-Army children.
- 32.46% of parents reported *no*, they do not believe Army children have additional needs compared to non-Army children.
- A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend an independent school reported that they believed Army Children have additional needs compared to non-Army children.

Chart 26: Parents report if they think their child has had a positive school experience.

	Yes, very much so	Yes, to some extent	No
Total	43.48	47.83	8.7
State	48.6	41.4	4.3
Independent	35.7	50	10.7
Other	29.7	48.6	10.8

Chart 27: Parents report if Army children have additional needs, compared to non-Army children.

	Yes	No
Total	67.54	32.46
State	60	31.4
Independent	75	21.4
Other	51.4	37.8

Parents were asked if they would like to expand on their answer and a total of 30 parents did so, with 2 themes emerging from these responses.
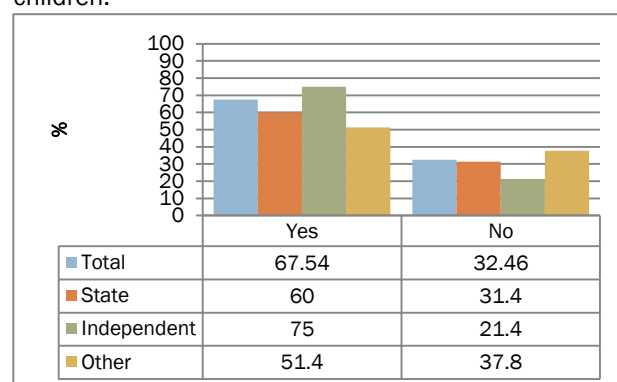
One theme was that parents believed the reason their child was having a positive school experience was due to them being in boarding school, with some parents saying, *"Yes, only because of the boarding school"*, *"I think this is mainly because we chose to go down the independent route"* and *"Since being in an independent school her experience has been extremely positive"*.

The second identified theme suggested that support played a large role in whether or not their child has had a positive or negative school experience. One parent said *"With only 12 in class they have support and understanding both for them directly and military understanding"*, while another said, *"Due to the large class numbers my autistic daughter was left every day in school to cope without any support or help from staff!"*

Parents that answered *yes,* were asked to expand on their answer, and to report the additional needs that their child has, compared to non-Army children. A total of 68 parents expanded their response, with 2 themes emerging.

One theme, with the most prevalent responses, was the *support and understanding needed during parental deployment.* Parents said, *"Separation anxiety during frequent and prolonger deployments"*, *"A high level of understanding if needed from all school staff to help children who may be struggling with disrupted home life"* and *"I think they have additional needs due to dad's being in a war zone"*.
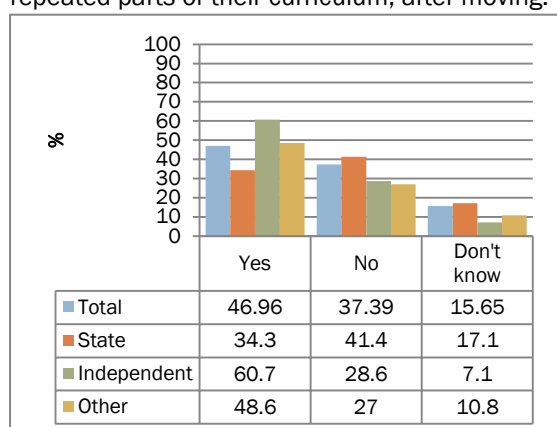
Another theme that was identified was the needs associated with *helping children to catch up on work missed during moving*, with parents saying, *"Extra help with missed learning due to moving mid-terms/year"*, *"Sometimes they end up repeating topics depending on schools"* and *"Settling in can be harder for an Army child and catching up with curriculum is also hard"*.

Child has repeated parts of the curriculum after moving to a new school.

Parents were asked, if, after moving, their child has had to study parts of the curriculum they had previously studied at a previous school. Results of this question are shown in chart 28. As this chart shows:

- 46.96% of parents reported *yes*, their child has had to study parts of the curriculum they had previously studied at a previous school.
- 37.39% of parents reported *no*, their child has not had to study parts of the curriculum they had previously studied at a previous school.
- A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend an independent school reported that their child(ren) had repeated parts of the curriculum, after moving.

Chart 28: Parents report if their child has repeated parts of their curriculum, after moving.

|	Yes	No	Don't know
Total	46.96	37.39	15.65
State	34.3	41.4	17.1
Independent	60.7	28.6	7.1
Other	48.6	27	10.8

Child is reaching their full potential at school.

Question 10 asks parents if they feel their child is reaching their full potential in school. Results of this question are shown in chart 29. Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 64.91% of parents reported *yes*, they feel their child is reaching their full potential in school.
- 35.09% of parents reported *no*, they do not feel their child is reaching their full potential in school.
- A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend an independent school reported that their child(ren) are reaching their potential in school, compared to parents whose child(ren) attend state or other types of school.

Chart 29: Parents report if they feel their child is reaching their full potential in school.

	Yes	No
Total	64.91	35.09
State	60	32.9
Independent	89.3	7.1
Other	48.6	40.5
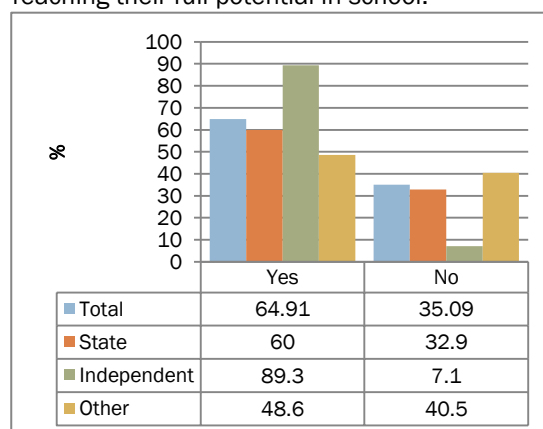
Parents were asked if they wanted to expand on their response. A total of 42 parents expanded on their answer, with 2 recurring themes.

One theme was parents suggesting that their *child is reaching their potential due to boarding schools*, with parents saying, "*Only because they have all been in boarding school*" and "*He wasn't but he is now he attends a boarding school*".

The other emerging theme was parents suggesting that *their child is reaching their potential because they help them with work at home*, with parents saying, "*I feel I have had to work hard with him at home to compensate for frequent changes*", "*Not yet, but hopefully with significant support from us at home, they will*" and "*Only through additional work at home is it anywhere near. This is still not enough*".

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Parent reports on their child's school experiences

The survey asked parents to report to what extent they agree with the following statements; shown in table 6 below. As this table shows

- The majority of parents disagreed to some extent with the statement *My child has had difficulty making friends in school*.
- The majority of parents disagreed to some extent with the statement *My child has had difficulty integrating into a school.*
- A higher proportion of pupils disagreed when asked *My child has been bullied in a school.*
- Although the majority of pupils disagreed with the statement *When my child has moved school, it has been difficult to discuss their needs with a school, a third of parents* agreed to some extent with this statement.
- The majority of parents agreed to some extent with the statement *When my child has moved school, it has been difficult to discuss their achievement levels at their previous school(s).*
- An equal proportion of parents agreed and disagreed with the statement *My child has struggled to reach their potential in school.*

Table 6: The extent to which parents agree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My child has had difficulty making friends in school	12 (10.43%)	23 (20.00%)	18 (15.65%)	41 (35.65%)	21 (18.26%)
My child has had difficulty integrating into a school	10 (8.62%)	31 (26.72%)	19 (16.38%)	39 (33.62%)	17 (14.66%)
My child has been bullied in a school	11 (9.57%)	23 (20.00%)	21 (18.26%)	42 (36.52%)	18 (15.65%)
When my child has moved school, it has been difficult to discuss their needs with a school	9 (7.89%)	25 (21.93%)	33 (28.95%)	35 (30.70%)	12 (10.53%)
When my child has moved school, it has been difficult to discuss their achievement levels at their previous school(s)	20 (17.54%)	29 (25.44%)	30 (26.32%)	26 (22.81%)	9 (7.89%)
My child has struggled to reach their potential in school	17 (15.04%)	25 (22.12%)	28 (24.78%)	29 (25.66%)	14 (12.39%)

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The effect of deployment on a child

Question 13 asks parents if they feel their child is affected by either parent being deployed or away on training exercises, and if so, how they are affected.

There was a mixed response to this question, with the majority of parents suggesting that their child has been very much affected, yet others that suggest that their child has not been affected at all.
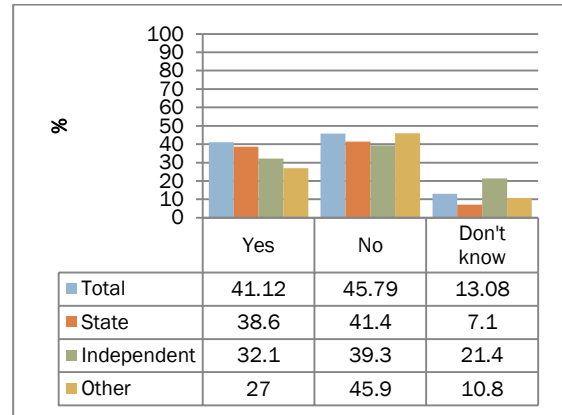
Those that suggest their child has been affected have said, "*Slight depression, sadness, anger, disappointment, confusion, frustration and elation on parents return!*" "*Emotionally unsettled*" and "*It can make them very unsettled – upset, angry or insecure*". Those that suggest their child is not affected have said, "*Now he is boarding – nil educational impact*", "*Not that much – changing school is far more impactful*" and "*Little direct effect*".

Parent opinions as to whether they feel schools understand the impact of deployment on their child

Question 14 asks parents if they feel schools understand the impact of a child, of a parent being deployed or being away on training exercise. Results of this question are shown in chart 30. Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 41.12% of parents reported *yes*, they feel schools understand the impact of a child, of a parent being deployed or being away on training exercise.
- 45.79% of parents reported *no*, they don't feel schools understand the impact of a child, of a parent being deployed or being away on training exercise.
- Fewer parents whose child(ren) attend other types of school reported that they feel schools understand the impact of a parent being deployed or away on training, compared to parents whose child(ren) attend state or independent schools.

Chart 30: Parents report if they feel schools understand the impact on a child, of a parent being deployed or being away on training exercise.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Total	41.12	45.79	13.08
State	38.6	41.4	7.1
Independent	32.1	39.3	21.4
Other	27	45.9	10.8

Parents were asked if they would like to expand on their response. A total of 47 parents expanded their answer, with one theme identified. The majority of responses suggested that whether the school understands or not, entirely depends on the type of school the child attends. More specifically, parents suggested that Service Children Education and military schools understand and provide support, while general state schools did not understand. Parents said "*Only if it a military school and everyone is in the same situation*" and "*Yes, if it is a forces school, or one which has large numbers of forces children, but no if it is a school where forces children are a minority group*".

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Do Army children require additional support while their parent(s) is away?

Question 15 asks parents if they feel Army children require additional support while a parent is deployed or away on a training exercise. Results of this question are shown in chart 31. Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 81.65% of parents reported *yes*, they feel Army children require additional support while a parent is deployed or away on a training exercise.
- 8.26% of parents reported *no*, they don't feel Army children require additional support while a parent is deployed or away on a training exercise.
- A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend a state school reported *yes*, they feel Army children require additional support while a parent is deployed or away on a training exercise.

Chart 31: Parent reports of if they feel Army children require additional support while a parent is deployed or away on a training exercise.

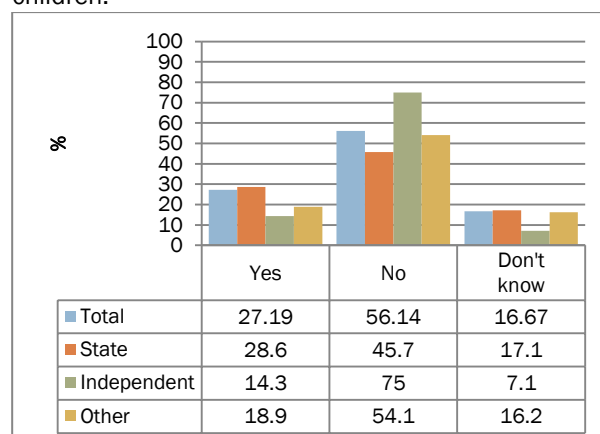|	Yes	No	Don't know
Total	81.65	8.26	10.09
State	80	5.7	5.7
Independent	71.4	7.1	14.3
Other	70.3	8.1	5.4
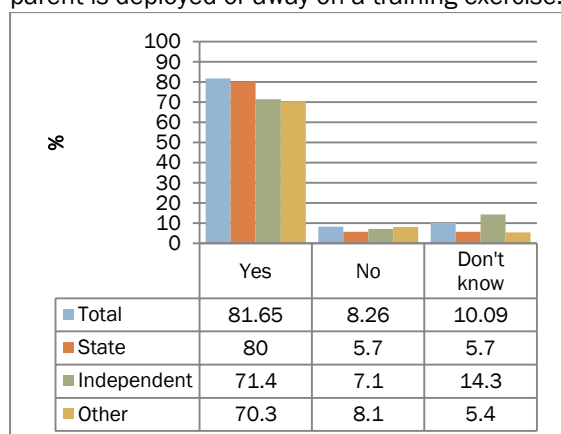
Parents were asked to suggest what additional support would be beneficial. 2 recurring themes have been identified. One is the use of counselling or discussion groups, with parents saying, *"One to one talking/counselling would be really beneficial for the children"*, *"Small groups getting together to talk about where and why their parent is away"* and *"A club of some sort where they can write letters and talk about their deployed parent"*. Another theme is that staff need to understand the situation and expect a change in behaviour of their child, with parents saying, *"Think all schools with Service Children should have a teacher especially trained who understands what is child is going through and how they can deal with their feelings"* and *"Primarily, for teaching staff to be aware so they can notice any changes in behaviour, attainment or attitude and discuss issues with the child or parents"*.

Does their child's school have activities specifically for Army children?

Question 12 asks parents if their child's current school has any activities that are specific to Army children. Results of this question are shown in chart 32. Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 27.19% of parents reported *yes*, their child's current school has any activities that are specific to Army children.
- 56.14% of parents reported *no*, their child's current school does not have any activities that are specific to Army children.
- A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend a state school reported *yes*, their child's current school has any activities that are specific to Army children.

Chart 32: Parent reports of if their child's current school has any activities that are specific to Army children.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Total	27.19	56.14	16.67
State	28.6	45.7	17.1
Independent	14.3	75	7.1
Other	18.9	54.1	16.2

A number of different types of activities were reportedly made available to pupils including 'Bluey Clubs'.

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Key Points for Consideration

- The majority of parents reported that their child attended a state school. However, 15.8% reported that their child attended an independent boarding school. Parents' reasons for sending their child to an independent boarding school included; *continuity and stability of their child's education, poor educational standards in state schools* and *to support their child's social and emotional wellbeing*.

- The majority of parents reported that Army pupils have additional needs in school compared to Non-Army pupils. Such additional needs included; *understanding and support during parental deployment* and *help to catch up on work missed during moving*.

- Almost half of parents reported that their child had repeated parts of the curriculum after moving.

- An equal proportion of parents agreed and disagreed with the statement *My child has struggled to reach their potential in school.*

- Over 40% of parents reported that, when their child moved school, they found it difficult to discuss their child's achievement levels at previous schools.

- The majority of parents reported that they felt their child required additional support while a parent is deployed.

- Just over a quarter of parents reported that their child's current school has activities specifically for Army children.

- Some interesting differences emerged when the type of school attended was included in the analyses, such differences include:
  - A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend an independent school reported that their child(ren) has a special educational need or disability.
  - Fewer parents' whose child attends a state school responded *no* to the question as to whether their child has had a positive school experience.
  - A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend an independent school reported that their child(ren) are reaching their potential in school, compared to parents whose child(ren) attend state or other types of school.
  - A higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attend a state school reported *yes*, their child's current school has any activities that are specific to Army children.

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Project C: Teacher Survey

Objectives

- To explore teachers' perceptions of Army pupils experiences of schools.
- To explore whether teachers perceive these experiences to affect attainment.
- To explore whether they feel that Army pupils reach their potential.

Method

Survey Tool

The teacher survey aimed to explore teacher's views about the needs and the potential of Army children within school, and the teacher's views of Army children's school experience. The survey consisted of 12 questions, including a combination of open and closed questions, which was designed specifically for the purposes of the study.

Participants

187 teachers were recruited in total; 44 participants from four primary schools, 148 participants from eight secondary schools and 1 from an online teachers forum.

46.5% (n=87) of the sample were teachers from state schools, 2.1% (n=4) from faith schools, 49.7% (n=93) from academy schools, 3.7% (n=7) from independent schools and 0.5% (n=1) from other schools. 98.3% (n=182) of the sample reported ever having taught an Army pupil, with 88.4% (n=153) of the sample reporting that they received Service Pupil Premium for the Army pupils currently attending their school.

All schools were in England and Wales, within the counties of Cheshire, Dorset, Essex, Kent, Lancashire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Yorkshire and Powys.

Procedure

Participating schools were sent an information pack and from this, a link to the teacher survey was distributed to all teachers in the school. A link to the survey was also posted on an online teachers' forum; the Teachers Corner. Teachers willing to participate were asked to complete the survey within their own time.

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Results: Teacher Survey

Teacher reports of differences in the school experience of Army Children and Non-Army Children

The survey explored teacher reports of whether they feel that Army Children have a different school experience to Non-Army Children. Results of this question are shown in chart 33. Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 66% of teachers reported that *yes* Army Children did have a different school experience to Non-Army Children.
- 5.2% of teachers reported that they *didn't know* whether Army Children had a different school experience to Non-Army Children.

Chart 33: Teacher reports of whether Army Children have a different school experience to Non-Army Children.
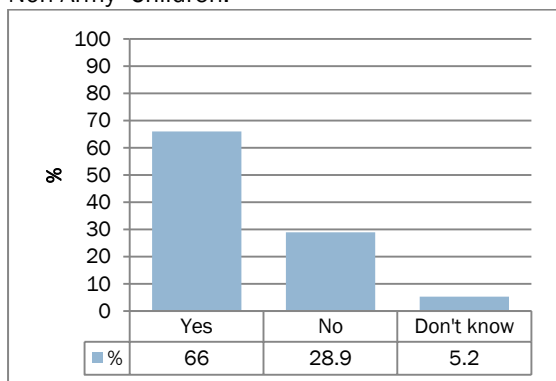
The teachers who answered *yes* were asked to expand on their answer, as to how the school experience of Army Children differs to Non-Army Children. 54 teachers responded to the question, with two themes emerging; <u>adjustment</u> and the <u>influence of home life</u>. . The theme of adjustment was identified, as a number of teachers reported the impact of moving on the school experience of Army Children: *"Sometimes gaps in knowledge are evident due to moving from one school to another. Sometimes attainment is reduced due to the stresses of moving, adjusting to a new environment and establishing new friendship groups"*. The influence of a child's home life also emerged as a theme, with many teachers describing the effect of Army children's home life on their school experience as a difference between Army Children and Non-Army Children: *"Children get very upset when they find out their parent is leaving to go abroad especially if in an unknown quantity ie bomb disposal'*.

Teacher reports of whether Army Children have additional needs to Non-Army Children

Question 5 explores teacher reports of whether they feel that Army Children have additional needs to Non-Army Children. Results of this question are shown in chart 34.
Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 78.8% of teachers reported that *yes* Army Children did have additional needs to Non-Army Children.
- 5.1% of teachers reported that they *didn't know* whether Army Children had additional needs to Non-Army Children

Chart 34: Teacher reports of whether Army children have additional needs to Non-Army children.
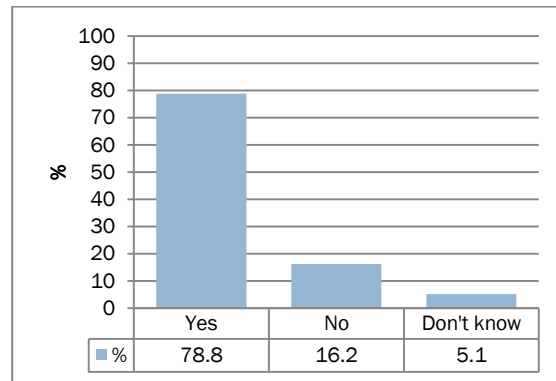
The teachers who answered *yes* were asked to expand on their answer, as to what the additional needs of Army Children are. 67 teachers responded to the question, with three themes emerging. *Differences across pupils* was identified as a theme as a number of teachers described the need not to 'generalise' the additional needs of Army Children: *"will vary from child to child"* The theme of <u>support</u> also emerged, with many reporting a need for emotional support for Army Children: *"Parent away from home doing a dangerous job must have huge emotional effects on students and their ability to concentrate. Support could be needed at any time to help these students feel more relaxed"* Finally, <u>Communication</u> emerged as a theme, with teachers suggesting that contact with parents could aid teachers in their understanding of the additional needs of Army Children and in supporting them: *"Regular communication with parents is possibly more important with Service Children to maintain a good relationship between school and parents".*

Question 6 explores teacher reports of whether they feel that Army Children who have a Special Educational Need have greater difficulties at school compared to Non-Army Children with a Special Educational Need (SEN). Results of this question are shown in chart 35.

Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 29.3% of teachers reported that *yes*, Army Children who have SEN had greater difficulties at school compared to Non-Army Children who have SEN.
- 40.4% of teachers reported that *no,* Army Children who have SEN did not have greater difficulties at school compared to Non-Army Children who have SEN.

Chart 35: Teacher reports of whether Army Children who have SEN have greater difficulties at school compared to Non-Army Children who have SEN.

	Yes	No	Don't know
■ %	29.3	40.4	30.3
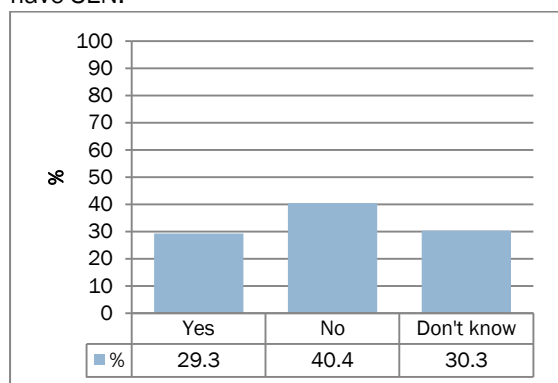
The teachers were asked to expand on their answer, with 23 teachers responding to the question. Overall, responses from teachers focused on the consistency of support available for Army Children with SEN and there was a perception that this support varied and was affected by moving schools: *"Lack of continuity and familiarity which is more essential to SEN pupils"*.

A number of teachers described inconsistencies in the support provided for the SEN of Army Children, others reported SEN were 'well supported': *"Since those with SEN have support in place, I would think that they are likely to have fewer difficulties"*

Teachers also reported a lack of support at home for Army Children with SEN, which may influence the difficulties at school experienced by Army Children: *"They are sometimes not supported enough at home as there is only one parent at home whilst the other is away"*.

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Question 7 explored the extent to which teachers agreed with statements comparing Army Children to Non-Army Children. Results of this question are shown in table 7. As this table shows:

- The majority of teachers agreed with the statement *Army Children have to move schools a lot.*
- The majority of teachers disagreed with the statement *Army Children have difficulty making friends with Non-Army Children.*
- The majority of teachers disagreed with the statement *Army Children find it difficult to integrate themselves into a school.*
- The majority of teachers disagreed with the statement *Army Children are more likely to be bullied.*
- The majority of teachers agreed with the statement w*hen Army Children move schools, it is difficult to find out what they have studied at their previous school(s)*
- The majority of teachers agreed with the statement w*hen Army Children move Schools, it is difficult to find out their achievement levels at the previous school(s)*
- The majority of teachers neither agreed or disagreed with the statement *Army Children struggle to reach their potential at school.*

Table 7: Teacher reports of the extent to which the educational experience of Army Children differs to that of Non-Army Children.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree/ Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Army Children have to move schools a lot	30 (30.3%)	53 (53.5%)	13 (13.1%)	3 (3%)	0 (0%)
Army Children have difficulty making friends with Non-Army Children	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	32 (32.3%)	43 (43.4%)	18 (18.2%)
Army Children find it difficult to integrate themselves into a school	2 (2%)	25 (25.3%)	24 (24.2%)	39 (39.4%)	9 (9.1%)
Army Children are more likely to be bullied	0 (0%)	3 (3.1%)	28 (28.6%)	51 (52%)	16 (16.3%)
When Army Children move schools, it is difficult to find out what they have studied at their previous school(s)	23 (23.5%)	51 (52%)	17 (17.4%)	7 (7.1%)	0 (0%)
When Army Children move Schools, it is difficult to find out their achievement levels at the previous school(s)	19 (19.2%)	49 (49.5%)	22 (22.2%)	9 (9.1%)	0 (0%)
Army Children struggle to reach their potential at school	3 (3%)	33 (33.3%)	41 (41.4%)	18 (18.2%)	4 (4%)

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Teacher reports of having enough support to effectively teach Army Children

Question 8 explores teacher reports of whether they feel they have enough support to effectively teach Army Children. Results of this question are shown in chart 36. Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 60.4% of teachers reported that *yes* they did have enough support to effectively teach Army Children.
- 21.9% of teachers reported that *no* they did not feel they had enough support to effectively teach Army Children.

Chart 36: Teacher reports of whether they have enough support to effectively teach Army Children.

	Yes	No	Don't know
%	60.4	21.9	17.7
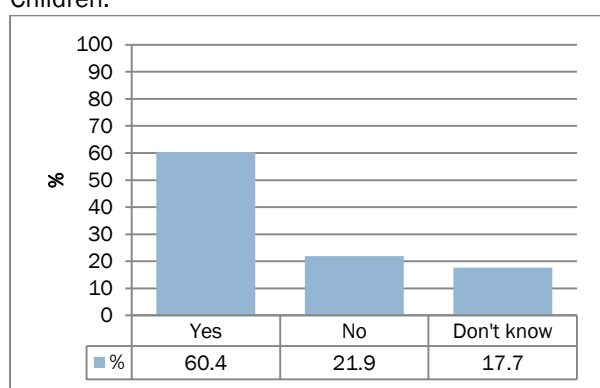
The teachers who answered *no* were asked to expand on their answer, outlining what additional support they would find useful. 21 teachers responded to the question, and the majority of responses focused on the <u>need for information sharing</u> to support their teaching. One teacher stated; *"Greater data transparency. If a parent is deployed and the parents have let the school know, then that information should be shared. Often it is kept on a 'need to know' – phone contacts aren't changed, and the 'heads up' about possible problems is not known by teachers"*

Furthermore, information sharing between schools regarding the previous attainment of Army Children was highlighted as an issue, suggesting that it may help in '*placing them in the best group and also making a smoother transition*': *"Time to have an initial meeting with child and parents when they move into area (this is usually done with one member of staff but as a subject teacher I would like to have the opportunity to talk with them to get an idea of issues and goals of the child early on rather than waiting for parents evening"*

Teacher reports of whether Army Children have reported to them already covering material at a previous school

33.3% of teachers reported that *yes* Army Children have reported to them that they have already covered material at a previous school. 23 teachers expanded upon their answer.

Some responses to the question highlighted particular <u>difficulties</u> teachers faced, as a number of teachers described pupil reports of having covered the material at a previous school as being '*managed poorly*', with pupils having to '*repeat the same tasks again*': The challenge of providing individual provision was also highlighted: *"No real, individual provision was made. Some teachers made time to help or set differentiated work, but no one gave them the time for this"*

Benefits to repeating content were also referred to, as some teachers described the need to go over material again: *"I set extension work or different research tasks if I feel they have covered the topic in enough detail. Quite often, teaching staff do not know to what extent students have completed the work and therefore students will repeat some work, but if this helps to build on knowledge and skills, this is not always a problem"* and *"Tried to ensure that the topic was as different as possible from their previous work. Tried to use them as experts which can have a positive effect on self esteem"*

A number of teachers reported having the child use their '*expertise to help other children*', alongside '*being moved to a different set*' and '*being given work to 'further develop and stretch existing knowledge*', indicating positive ways of managing previously covered material.

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Teacher reports of their confidence in supporting pupils with concerns relating to their life in the Army

Question 10 explores teacher reports of whether they would feel confident in supporting or advising Army Children if they came to teachers with concerns relating to life in the Army. Results of this question are shown in chart 37.

Overall, the findings of this question showed:

- 64.7% of teachers reported that *yes* they would feel confident in providing support or advise to Army Children.

- 13.1% of teachers reported that *no,* they did not feel confident in supporting Army Children with concerns relating to Army life.

Chart 37: Teacher reports of whether they would feel confident in supporting or advising Army Children with concerns relating to life in the Army.

	Yes	No	Unsure
■ %	64.7	13.1	22.2
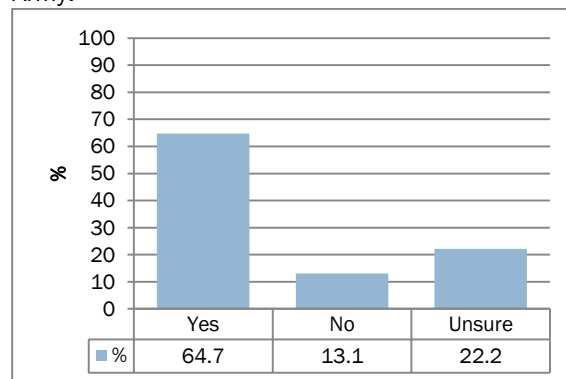
16 teachers expanded upon their answers, regarding the support they feel able to provide Army Children relating to their life in the Army. Some teachers referred to their *personal experiences* in supporting or advising pupils with concerns relating to their life in the Army: *"Am army wife so know who I might be able to refer them to if I can't help. Have insight to army life"* and *"I don't have very much knowledge of Army life so it would depend on the nature of the question. If it was to do with them personally e.g. anxiety about moving schools/parents working away I feel like I could support them"*.

Some teachers mentioned *referral* in their response, as a number of teachers described feeling '*ok to discuss some aspects*' of Army life, but also referred pupils when they felt someone else would be more suitable to support or advise: *"I was able to refer him to other students who had experienced the same to talk to and gain reassurance from. Our school is near an army base so I am able to call on staff who have experienced life in the Army and life as an Army spouse who are always available for situations when Service Children need support"*

Teachers reported that they would also 'seek advice from colleagues and peers', suggesting a 'support structure' within schools.

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

Teacher reports of activities their school offer especially for Army Children

Question 11 explores teacher reports of whether their school has activities especially for Army Children. Results of this question are shown in chart 38.

Overall, the findings of this question showed:
- 34.3% of teachers reported that *yes* their school does offer activities especially for Army Children.
- 24.2% of teachers reported that they were *unsure* as to whether their school offered activities especially for Army Children.

Chart 38: Teacher reports of whether their school has activities especially for Army Children.

%	Yes	No	Unsure
%	34.3	41.4	24.2
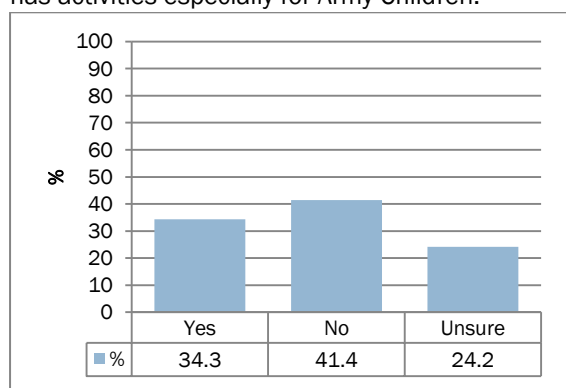
The teachers who answered *yes* were asked to expand on their answer, describing the types o activities on offer. 17 teachers responded to the question, with 3 groups of activities emerging. Teachers gave examples of E-Bluey Club, which is a letter writing club, support activities, and social events, such as a Christmas party for Army Children and going to the cinema.

Teacher reports of their experience of teaching Army Children

Question 12 explores any other comments teacher may have regarding their experience of teaching Army Children. 14 teachers responded to the question, with one theme emerging. The theme of the personal characteristics and aptitudes of Army Children was identified, as a number of teachers reported that '*Army children show a high level of resilience*'. Reports of Army Children having a '*good aptitude for Languages*' and that '*with proper support could do very well', suggest that further guidance and assistance may be needed to support their learning and that teachers also had positives views of the behaviour of Army Children*:

Key Points for Consideration
- 66% of teachers reported that Army children have a different school experience to Non-Army children and 78.8% of teachers reported that Army pupils have additional needs to Non-Army pupils.
- 60.4% of teachers reported having sufficient support to effectively teach Army pupils. However, teachers highlighted the need for time and information sharing to ensure they understand an Army pupils previous educational experience.
- Two thirds of teachers feel confident in supporting or advising Army children with concerns relating to Army life.
- A third of teachers reported that their school offers activities especially for Army children.

The Educational Attainment of Army Pupils

General Discussion & Recommendations

The findings from this project highlight the diverse and complex educational experience of Army pupils. The Department of Education (2012) reported little difference between Service and Non-Service pupils in terms of attainment scores, a finding which was supported by the AFF's FoI requests to Local Authorities, which also suggested little difference in attainment scores. However findings from this project found a significant difference was found in Year 10 and 11 English attainment scores, with Army pupils performing significantly lower in English compared to Non-Army pupils. No significant differences were found in Maths and Science attainment scores. Unfortunately, due to the lack of primary schools willing to participate in the project, analysis of Year 6 attainment scores was not possible due to insufficient data. These results highlight the need to continue to explore the issue of attainment in service pupils, in particular to explore attainment across the different services due to the different school experiences of Army, Navy and RAF pupils. In addition, the issue of attainment in English requires further exploration, [*__Recommendation 1__*].

Alongside exploring the educational attainment of Army children, an additional aim of this study was to explore to what extent Army children are meeting their potential in school. Findings from the teacher and parent survey are comparable in terms of the perceptions of whether Army children are meeting their potential in school. Just over a third of teachers reported that they agreed with the notion that Army children struggle to reach their potential in school (36.3%, n=36). Similarly, just over a third of parents reported that they agreed with the notion that their child(ren) are struggling to reach their potential (37.2%, n=42), more parents whose children attend independent and other schools reported this, compared to those whose child(ren) attend a state school. When asked directly, a higher proportion of Year 10 & 11 Army pupils (11.8%, n=6) *strongly agreed* with the statement *I feel I am reaching my potential with my school work*, compared to non-army pupils (3.9%, n=2).

The pupil and parent surveys explored the prevalence of Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities among pupils in the study. Overall, a higher proportion of Year 6 Army Pupils (23.8%, n=5) compared to Year 6 Non-Army Pupils (4.8%, n=1) and a higher proportion of Year 10 & 11 pupils (9.8%, n=5) compared to Year 10 & 11 Non-Army Pupils (3.9%, n=2) reported having a

Special Educational Need and/or Disability. In addition, results from the parent survey found that overall, 15.5% of parents reported that their child(ren) had a Special Educational Need or Disability, with a higher proportion of parents whose child(ren) attended an Independent school reporting this (21.4%), compared to parents whose child(ren) attend state (15.7%) or other (16.2%) schools. This compares to a nationally reported rate of Special Educational Needs in pupils of 17.9% (DoE, 2014). The prevalence of Special Educational Needs in the Year 6 sample should be interpreted with caution, due to the small sample size, however some differences are evident in the sample, particularly in the parents of children who attend Independent School. It may be that a child having a Special Educational Need or Disability is a factor in parents' decisions to send their child to an independent school. We recommend that future research exploring the attainment of Army children, explore the issue of Special Educational Needs in greater detail, to examine whether this is a factor impacting on pupil attainment [*__Recommendation 2__*].

In terms of repeating material in school, OFSTED (2011) highlighted how Service Children often missed or repeated aspects of the curriculum, which was supported by the results of this project. 52.4% of Year 6 pupils and 33.3% of Year 10 and 11 Army Pupils reported having studied aspects of the curriculum more than once. The only subjects reported to having been taught more than once were Maths, science and History. This finding was also echoed in the parent and teacher survey, with almost half of parents reporting that their child had repeated parts of the curriculum after moving and a third of teachers reported they had taught pupils who reported repeating aspects of the curriculum. Results of the parent and teacher surveys provide some additional context to this issue. Over 40% of parents reported that, when their child moved school, they found it difficult to discuss their child's achievement levels at previous schools. In addition, 60.4% of teachers reported having sufficient support to effectively teach Army pupils. However, teachers highlighted the need for time and information sharing to ensure they understand an Army pupil's previous educational experience. The repeating of curriculum continues to be an issue for Army children, therefore this is an issue that warrants urgent attention. Means of facilitating the sharing of information and details of previous educational experience warrant urgent attention. Findings from the teacher survey suggest

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teachers require time and support to be able to access information and spend time with pupils and their families to discuss previous educational attainment, [*Recommendation 3*].

Research, such as that conducted by Eodanable and Lauchlan (2012) suggest that Service Children, who experience frequent school moves have poorer wellbeing. Aspects of pupil wellbeing and the additional needs of Army pupils were explored in all three surveys used in the project. Fewer Year 6 Army pupils reported *never* feeling lonely in school, compared to Non-Army Pupils. Conversely, a higher proportion of Army pupils reported *sometimes* and *often* feeling lonely in school. In terms of the Year 10 and 11 pupils, fewer Army pupils reported *never* feeling lonely in school. A slightly higher proportion of Army pupils reported feeling lonely in school *very often* and a higher proportion of Non-Army pupils reported feeling lonely *fairly often.* In addition, Year 6 and Year 10 and 11 pupils reported their experiences while a parent is deployed. Army pupils reported feeling worried, scared and stressed while their parent was deployed. These findings were echoed by the parent survey, where the majority of parents reported that Army pupils have additional needs in school compared to Non-Army pupils. Such additional needs included; *understanding and support during parental deployment* in addition, the majority of parents felt their child needs additional support in school while a parent is deployed. The majority of teachers felt that Army children had additional needs compared to Non-Army children. However, the lack of school participation and support from some schools may suggest that there needs to be an increased awareness of the unique experience of Army children and some of the additional needs Army children may have in school. The opportunity to share best practice across schools and teachers is strongly recommended, [*Recommendation 4*].

One means of supporting pupils in school, is to provide tailored and specialised support and activities for specific groups of pupils. Just over a quarter of parents reported that their child's current school has activities specifically for Army children, in addition a third of teachers reported that their school offers activities especially for Army children. In the pupils, a higher proportion

of Year 6 pupils compared to Year 10 and 11 pupils reported that there were school activities for Army pupils, such activities included, *bluey clubs* and *Young Soldiers*. It is important however, to work with pupils to identify activities appropriate to their needs and to support their integration into school [*Recommendation 5*].

The main aim of this project was to determine how Army children's attainment compares with children from other walks of life in both primary and secondary schools and to explore Army pupils school experiences. The study was the first survey of its type to focus specifically on Army children, as opposed to Service Children more genetically, and also the first to gather and triangulate data from pupils, parents and teachers. The findings of the project highlight how Army children have unique educational experiences and have additional needs that warrant greater awareness and support.

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Appendix 1: Freedom of Information Act Requests

The Army Families Federation submitted Freedom of Information Act Requests to Local Authorities in the UK. The FoI request, stated the following:

Under the right of access given by the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations, I would like to know:
1. *How the absent rate for Service Children compares with that of all pupils, as an average across your authority.*
2. *How achievement at Key Stage 4, in terms of those pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A to C, compares between all pupils and Service Children, as an average across your authority.*

In total, three Local Authorities responded to the FoI request, the data are shown in tables 7 to 9.

Table 7: Absence Data, Split by Local Authority

		Total Absent Sessions	Total Possible Sessions	% Absence
Herefordshire Council	Service Children	3326	76318	4.4
	All Pupils	154777	3069854	5.0
Suffolk County Council	Service Children	8984	174760	5.1
	All Pupils *	437340	8731012	5.01
Edinburgh	Service Children	3149	42753	7.4%
	All Pupils	910305	15036986	6.1%

Table 8: Achievement Data, Split by Local Authority

		Cohort	Achieve	% Achieve
Herefordshire Council	Service Children	39	33	84.6
	All Pupils	1826	1542	84.4
Suffolk County Council	Service Children	75	57	76
	All Pupils	7336	5428	74

Table 9: Achievement Data, Edinburgh

	Nos. of S4 pupils with Standard Grade Awards in the 2012-2013 examination diet	
	Standard Grade bands 1-3	5+ Standard Grade bands 1-3
Armed Forces	8	1
Non-Armed Forces	2646	1568

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Appendix ii: Overview of Key Policy Recommendations

Admissions to Schools in England and the Armed Forces' Covenant (2013), based on the School Admissions Code (2012).

- Those in the Armed Forces should not face any disadvantage due to their service, however preferential treatment should not be offered.
- On the confirmation of a posting or when returning from service overseas, Local Authorities must provide Service Children with a place before the arrival of the family.

Behaviour and Emotional Well-Being Strategy (2010).

- Pro-social behaviour and emotional well-being will be encouraged and staff will anticipate and manage behaviour.
- Schools should be aware of the needs of Service families.

The More Able, Gifted and Talented (2008).

- Teachers will encourage achievement and help children overcome barriers and underachievement.
- Gifted and talented students will be recognised, assessed and supported.

Home Education Strategy (2013).

- The Education Act (1996) dictates that between the age of 5 and 16 years old, children must practice full-time education which has been suited to their age and ability.
- The parent must provide an education which is appropriate for the special educational needs of their child.
- The Service Children's Education will support parents, at the request of the parent, through providing information and ensuring contact with service providers such as local health services and careers advice.
- The Local Authority should be notified that the child will be educated at home and will provide a place at a school should circumstances change.

Raising the Achievement of Disadvantaged Children (2011).

- The government will provide £1.8 billion in funding for the pupil premium in the 2013 to 2014 financial year.
- Schools will be required to disclose the use and impact of the pupil premium.
- The Education Endowment Foundation will work on projects with schools to raise attainment.
- £50 million in funding will be available for summer schools to support the transition from primary to secondary school for disadvantaged children.

Special Needs Policy (2013).

- The policy encourages inclusion, through early assessment and prompt intervention so as not to impact on education.
- Mobility should be taken into account and suitable support should continue where possible. However, the support available overseas may not replicate that in the UK.
- The views of the child should be considered to support their learning.

The Nation's Commitment: Cross-Government Support to our Armed Forces, their Families and Veterans (2008).

- Following a review, there are aims to improve admissions and the allocation of school places.
- There will be an educational performance review to identify any underachievement in the educational attainment of Service Children.
- A reduction in the disruption of special educational needs support when moving.
- Priority will be given to children whose parents serve in the Armed Forces when allocating places at State Boarding Schools in England and there will be an increase in the number of places available, to reduce the impact Service mobility may have on education.

Appendix iii: Parent review of their child's school experience

Table 5a: The extent to which parents agree with the following statements, split by school type

	Strongly agree			Agree			Neither agree/ disagree			Disagree			Strongly disagree		
	State	Independent	Other	State	Independent	Other	State	Independent	Other	State	Independent	Other	State	Independent	Other
My child has had difficulty making friends in school	3 (4.3%)	5 (17.9%)	5 (13.5%)	45 (17.1%)	9 (32.1%)	6 (16.2%)	11 (15.7%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (5.4%)	28 (40%)	7 (25%)	12 (32.4%)	11 (15.7%)	2 (7.1%)	8 (21.6%)
My child has had difficulty integrating into a school	1 (1.4%)	4 (14.3%0)	6 (16.2%)	11 (39.3%)	11 (39.3%)	6 (16.2%)	6 (21.4%)	6 (21.4%)	2 (5.4%)	5 (17.9%)	5 (17.9%)	12 (32.4%)	10 (14.3%)	1 (3.6%)	7 (18.9%)
My child has been bullied in a school	4 (5.7%)	5 (17.9%)	2 (5.4%)	16 (22.9%)	8 (28.6%)	5 (13.5%)	12 (17.1%)	5 (17.9%)	5 (13.5%)	23 (32.9%)	8 (28.6%)	13 (35.1%)	10 (14.3%)	1 (3.6%)	8 (21.6%)
When my child has moved school, it has been difficult to discuss their needs with a school	6 (8.6%)	2 (7.1%)	3 (8.1%)	11 (15.7%)	10 (35.7%)	6 (16.2%)	22 (31.4%)	7 (25%)	7 (18.9%)	19 (27.1%)	6 (21.4%)	13 (35.1%)	6 (8.6%)	2 (7.1%)	4 (10.8%)
When my child has moved school, it has been difficult to discuss their achievement levels at their previous school(s)	10 (14.3%)	5 (17.9%)	8 (21.6%)	18 (25.7%)	7 (25%)	8 (21.6%)	18 (25.7%)	7 (25%)	7 (18.9%)	13 (18.6%)	5 (17.9%)	8 (21.6%)	5 (7.1%)	3 (10.7%)	1 (2.7%)
My child has struggled to reach their potential in school	5 (7.1%)	5 (17.9%)	8 (21.6%)	12 (17.1%)	8 (28.6%)	7 (18.9%)	18 (25.7%)	5 (17.9%)	6 (16.2%)	19 (27.1%)	7 (25%)	6 (16.2%)	8 (11.4%)	2 (7.1%)	6 (16.2%)

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