

CASE STUDY

THE WELLINGTON ACADEMY (11-18)



SCHOOL CONTEXT

Wellington Academy is a large co-educational secondary school educating almost 1200 students, including sixth formers. A member of Ascend Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust in Wiltshire, the school is in Tidworth, Wiltshire, on the edge of Salisbury Plain. The area is home to several Army units, notably 26 Engineers, KRH, Fusiliers, 5 Rifles to name but a few, and currently 48% of the school's roll are Service children. One of the academy's deputies has strategic responsibility for this group of learners, and the school also employs an *In-Year Induction and Service Pupil Premium Coordinator (SPPC)*, a dedicated staff member who acts as a direct liaison between the children and young people of Armed Forces families, their parents and school staff. This relatively new post is partly externally funded for the current year but due to its impact, is likely to be continued.

<https://www.thewellingtonacademy.org.uk/>

Support is provided for the whole Armed Forces family at times of transition, and the importance of an academy Service Pupil Premium Coordinator is emphasised in this case study. The potential negative impact of moving schools is understood by all staff, and tested procedures are in place and followed robustly to minimise this.



SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

| Emerging practice | Developing practice | Embedding practice |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent.</p> <p>School leaders will be beginning to raise awareness of what is needed to support Armed Forces children and young people more effectively and will be reflecting on the impact of their existing support strategies to strengthen these.</p> | <p>Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle's question to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>School leaders will have considered how they are addressing this principle's question and are taking steps to embark on a regular programme of reflection, monitoring and evaluation. Practice at this level is likely to be either not fully embedded or consistently applied by all staff, or both.</p> | <p>Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle's question with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact.</p> <p>School leaders will have fully addressed this principle's question and regularly monitor, review and evaluate their strategies to demonstrate the impact. Practice at this level will be both embedded and consistently applied by all staff.</p> |

EXAMPLES FROM PRACTICE

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| <p>4.1 To what extent does your school identify Armed Forces children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospective parents are asked if any in-year school move is connected to a member of family serving in the Armed Forces. All staff know that Service Pupil Premium can be claimed by such identification, and the school's admissions form reflects this. The school's website has a section on Service Pupil Premium and gives information regarding the importance of providing accurate information, as well as the benefits to children. The SPPC sends reminders of the importance of self-identification via weekly bulletins and emails. Open days and welcome evenings, along with summer school for Y7 children, provides opportunities for Armed Forces families to get together and build confidence in their shared identity. The SPPC emails Armed Forces families regularly to ask for details of any deployments/exercises or other circumstances that may impact on its Service children. The resulting information is shared with student managers and heads of year, and other relevant staff members. The school's strong links with the Army's welfare teams means that it is usually kept informed of upcoming whole regiment events. | <p>EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING</p> |
| <p>4.2 To what extent do you work with outgoing and incoming Armed Forces families through the long transition process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School leaders recognise the need for a whole family approach to school to school transition; it is for this reason that the role of the SPPC was introduced a couple of years ago. Teaching staff have received training so that they understand the transition cycle and its potential negative impact. Year teams contact military families prior to joining to gather information on any needs a child might have, and to ascertain whether he/she has moved schools before, gathering details if this is the case. The school adopts flexible approaches to try and ensure smooth transitions, being aware that arrival dates may change at short notice and that home addresses may not be available until the time of the actual move. The SPPC acts as a named staff member for all new military families. When a child leaves, staff gather relevant educational documentation, data and any other information to share with the new school once confirmation has been received that the move has happened. School staff keep in touch with families prior to their joining the school and continue to do so over the first few weeks, supporting children's wellbeing, as well as helping them set up all the practical aspects of school life (e.g. system log ins, homework expectations, etc). A well-established induction process is followed, throughout which all are kept informed of the child's start date, which tutor group and classes he/she will be joining, with any changes communicated in a timely fashion. Year teams collaborate with the child and SPPC on follow up communication over the first few weeks. Contact details are readily available to parents. A similarly tried and tested student departure process is in place and followed with rigour to support all families leaving the academy. | <p>EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING</p> |

4.3

To what extent do you welcome Armed Forces families, both before and after their moves, and ensure a positive experience from the first day?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The SPPC sends a welcome email to new families with any pertinent details, confirming arrangements, including dates and details of tutor groups. She signposts the website as a source of information and this is regularly updated. Additionally, the school employs a social media manager to ensure this method of communication, often favoured by Armed Forces families, is kept up to date.
- A first day routine for a joining child includes a 'meet and greet', a school tour, a tutor introduction, as well help to navigate the school grounds. Everything is in place so that the new child feels he/she belongs. A buddy is usually allocated from the child's tutor group. A photo of the new child is added to the school's management information system on the day of arrival.
- Whilst a follow-up meeting during the first few weeks is not always required, a follow-up phone call with, or email to, the parents is always made within the first fortnight of a child starting. The SPPC and Year Team staff regularly check in on all new children over a few weeks from their starting dates.

4.4

To what extent do you work with Armed Forces children's previous or future schools to transfer records and find out about learning, wellbeing, achievements, interests, skills and their family context?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Academic data, safeguarding information, and other records are requested from previous schools using a bespoke transfer form. The same form is promptly sent to new schools when children move. The SPPC leads on this and where records from a student's previous school are incomplete, these are chased.
- Safeguarding information is always shared speedily in a secure and confidential manner, either using a shared safeguarding system or with information being sent directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), contact details for whom are provided to transferring schools. DSLs check with the transferring school/local authority as to whether there are any safeguarding concerns not included in records, as well as any historic involvement with Children's Services.
- The information transferred goes beyond academic achievement to include interests, wider achievements and children's family context. This is gathered during the initial phone call with a prospective family, during any children visits and by means of a section on the admissions form. Where the SPPC is made aware, contact is also made with other professionals involved with the family.
- In some case, a departing child's new school is contacted after his/her departure to check things are going well.

4.5

To what extent do you minimise discontinuity in additional support, for example by minimising re-assessment of needs?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The SPPC asks a student's previous school to provide information prior to him/her joining that she then shares with teachers and, where relevant, with the school's Learning Support team to minimise discontinuity of provision (e.g. EAL/additional learning needs).
- Form tutors support new starters with their learning and introduce them to the house system, year-group assemblies and other school routines and initiatives. They also introduce them to **Compass for Life**, a Personal, Social and Health Education programme delivered by form tutors.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) records are always shared between transferring schools and, where possible, educational support detailed in learning plans is maintained. Where available, the school ensures continuity of specialist services that a child received previously (e.g., speech and language support) or makes speedy referrals when additional external support is needed.

4.6

To what extent do you help Armed Forces children build new and maintain existing relationships?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- Tutors identify specific children in their tutor groups, often military themselves, to function as buddies for new arrivals. A matching process is deployed based on knowledge of the children concerned. This system is being reviewed to make it even more effective.
- Drop-in sessions are held twice a week which all children can access for additional pastoral support, and a Thrive room is available at break and lunchtimes, if needed.
- There are many varied after-school clubs available to new starters. Recently, a big investment has been made with the school's **Combined Cadet Force group**, led by both external and some school staff. This is popular and typically attended by about twenty-five children

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

The School Leadership Team and staff recognise the importance of smooth transition and the impact it can have on a pupil's learning. We believe it goes beyond the first day in school and there are processes in place to ensure support starts **prior** to family's arrival and continues as long as it's required. We want students who start here in-year to feel they belong to the school community just as much as students who started here in Year 7.