

CASE STUDY

BAGLAN PRIMARY SCHOOL (3-11)



SCHOOL CONTEXT

Baglan Primary School is a small, local-authority-maintained school, with its own nursery and playgroup. The school is situated in the community of Baglan in Neath, Port Talbot. There are currently 267 pupils on roll of which 11 (4.2%) are from Armed Forces families. Most Armed Forces parents work in the Army with roles that include a pilot who flies drones, a paratrooper in the Artillery, a Royal Signals technician and an engineer. The school also has links to the Royal Navy with a warfare specialist. Some of the Service children's parents who have now left the Forces still have links via part-time reserves, charity work and local community groups.

<https://baglan-primary-school.j2bloggy.com/>

This case study examines how school leaders at Baglan Primary School utilised the self-evaluation framework for Principle 5 to evaluate how children's voices are heard, used in decision-making processes and the subsequent impact on school practices.



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

<p>5.1 <i>To what extent are Armed Forces children represented in school and other forums?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has a dedicated group for its Service children called the Little Troopers. This club allows the children to share their experiences and feelings with each other and make sure their voices are heard. The school has two children who are the Armed Forces School Ambassadors and they represent all the Service children in the school. One of the Service children is on the School Council and represents the views / opinions of the Little Troopers group in the school. Another Year 6 Service child is the prefect this year. During a Little Troopers assembly, Service children shared their own experiences and had an opportunity to speak to guests with links to the Forces including a senior officer and veteran. 	<p>EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING</p>
<p>5.2 <i>To what extent do Armed Forces children's voices inform your strategies, approach and actions throughout the school?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school has used the Supporting Service Children in Education Wales (SSCE Cymru) Listening to your Service Children project to begin discussion about what children would like to see happen in their Little Trooper's club. The children wanted to earn badges to display on the sashes they wear- so far, they have earned friendship, poetry, team building and sign language badges. All staff are made aware of the Service children in the school and when any parent is deployed. The school is creating an Armed Forces Community room; this will be a safe space for Service children to come together, share their experiences, talk about their feelings and receive any support they may require. Service children also have a QR code to scan that directs them to the FlipGrid messenger platform where children can speak to the headteacher directly to share their voices or feelings. Little Troopers have journals where they can share their feelings, something good that has happened today, who they can talk to etc. There are regular check-ins with the journals to ensure the school can support the children. The journals are accessible to Service children throughout the school day. 	<p>EMERGING DEVELOPING EMBEDDING</p>

5.3 To what extent do Armed Forces children feel heard and understood?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- All Service children know they are part of the Armed Forces team and would be confident and happy to seek staff out to share how they are feeling whether it be positive or negative.
- All Service children reported feeling heard and understood during a recent *Little Troopers* assembly during which they shared their experiences and how they are supported in school.
- Service children are encouraged to take part in the many projects provided for them to share their experiences. For example, two Service children participated in a local arts competition and achieved second place, winning a Samsung tablet. This was celebrated on [Twitter](#), in classes and during a weekly assembly.
- The school's Service children recently had a poetry session with the charity [Never Such Innocence](#) where they all worked on a piece of writing which reflects their feelings and their experiences. These were entered into the charity's competition during April.
- The headteacher regularly writes a piece in the [School Newsletter](#) sharing what the *Little Troopers* have been up to, sharing their voices and celebrating them.
- The school is currently creating a questionnaire to ask if Service children feel heard and understood so that the school can continue to develop and fully embed this action.

5.4 To what extent do you act on feedback and ideas from Armed Forces children?

EMERGING
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- When the school first formed the *Little Troopers Club*, the children were asked what they would like from the group and how best the school could support them.
- Service children are very eager to earn badges for activities and projects that they take part in such as outdoor activities, poetry, team building etc. These are displayed on their sashes. They will continue to earn badges throughout the year. The activities / projects are arranged from Service children's ideas.
- The school provides opportunities for Service children to meet people with links to the Armed Forces. One of the children is interested in coding, and the school created an opportunity for him to meet Kath Morris who served at Bletchley Park and talked about her time coding there.
- The school management works as a team to support the school's Service children and are in regular contact, sharing how they can support the Service children, provide opportunities for them and act on the feedback they provide.
- Management feeds back to the headteacher and at governors' meetings - which includes to an Armed Forces Governor - how the school is supporting the Service children, ensuring their voices are heard, and how it is responding to the children's ideas and feedback.
- School managers are also in regular contact with Service families and share what the school is doing for their children. The headteacher also has a monthly check-in with the parents so they can share anything they feel may be relevant (e.g. deployment plans).
- Service children are fully involved in developing an Armed Forces community room, from choosing furniture to how they want the room to be set up. They have expressed they would like to involve some of their civilian friends so they can play some of the games purchased with them.

5.5 To what extent do you monitor and communicate your actions in response to listening to Armed Forces children?

EMERGING
DEVELOPING
EMBEDDING

- The headteacher regularly monitors the *FlipGrid* messenger platform and Service children's feelings journals to check if any of them require support.
- A wide range of methods are used to monitor and communicate actions the school has taken in response to listening to its Service children. These include regular communication with the headteacher, reports to governors, feedback at staff meetings and monthly check-ins with families.
- The school also communicates via a weekly newsletter as well as via [Twitter](#) on social media.

SCHOOL LEADER ADVICE

"My advice would be to spend time getting to know your Service children as they all have their own unique and different experiences. It is important to build up trust with your Service children so that they feel comfortable sharing their views, experiences and feelings with you. Showing Service children that you are listening and responding to what they are sharing is vital. Knowing you make the Service children feel special, heard and valued is the best feeling in the world."

●● My son is in Year 6 at Baglan Primary School. This is the fourth primary school he's attended, an unfortunate side effect of being part of a military family. Baglan Primary has been very supportive and are acutely aware of the challenges Service children experience. As well as one-to-one support, the school has run a number of events/activities that have helped him settle in and make new friends, Force Fitness and Reading Force to name a few. I would thoroughly recommend Baglan Primary School to any Service family settling in the area."

(Armed Forces Governer)