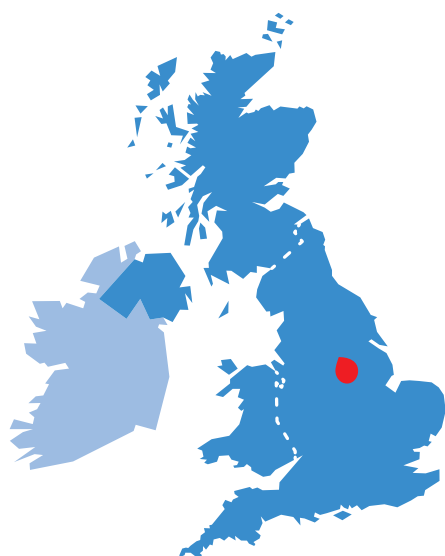


CASE STUDY



LEEMING RAF COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, NORTHALLERTON, NORTH YORKSHIRE

A small primary school with 210 pupils, the school sits 'behind the wire' on Leeming RAF Base. All pupils are from forces families. The school has exceptionally high rates of mobility and deployment.




This Primary school in North Yorkshire identified a need for the wellbeing of their pupils to be supported as they experience repeated mobility, deployment and separations. This case study details the activities and impact of a specific pastoral support role and gives advice to other practitioners.

THE NEED

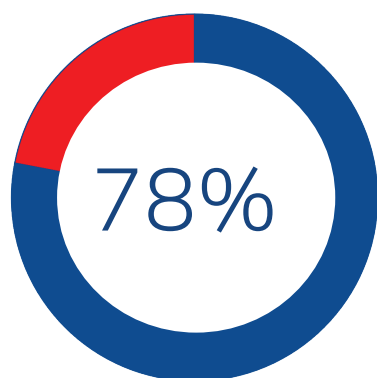
High levels of mobility and parental deployment make stability, wellbeing and pastoral needs an issue for all pupils in this school. The turbulence profoundly affects not only those families involved but also the school's stable pupils. Every week, their classes change, close friends leave, parents are deployed to dangerous action zones, and their world is often in a state of flux.

Teachers observed a particularly strong impact of this transitory environment on those children with additional needs. The school has a high number of pupils identified as having ASD or SEMH issues who find it particularly difficult to learn and thrive without a stable and predictable environment.

Considering this context, the school identified the need for a dedicated, trained staff member to provide bespoke mental health, nurture and transitional support.

 My Dad's in the army and my Mum's in the RAF – it can be so hard, especially if they are both away at the same time

CASE STUDY



In 2018, 78% of year 6 pupils experienced parental deployment

WE ARE ALSO

PROUD of how stakeholders such as the Local Authority, The Children's Commissioner, the RAF Families' Federation and the MOD celebrate our proactive support for our Service children.



SOLUTIONS TAKEN


The school secured funding for a full time Pastoral Mentor to develop and lead specific projects and to support emotional wellbeing and social or pastoral needs.

The role is both proactive:

- running targeted group interventions such as Lego therapy or Silver SEAL;
- training staff and parents in Emotional First Aid;
- establishing transition processes such as organising meetings with new or departing pupils;
- putting in place support to prepare children for transition such as helping them research a new area or setting up mechanisms to make new contacts before a move or keep in contact with old friends;
- organising staff CPD and developing resources;

and reactive:

- providing the enhanced level of conversation, care and input that children require when they are at their most vulnerable;
- supporting children with attachment issues, parental deployments, social vulnerability, bereavement, trauma, friendship struggles, or simply feeling particularly emotional;
- 1 to 1 support, both regular scheduled appointments and ad hoc informal chats. Pupils can be referred by teachers, or can refer themselves;
- spending time on the playground to develop break time support systems and to spot pupils in need of support with relationships or short term issues.

 When someone in my family is away being in a group really helps me feel better

CASE STUDY

THE SCIP ALLIANCE

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

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

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



There's a board in lunch hall that tells us who is leaving and who's not. It helps us to feel welcome – and to welcome others

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

Staff report the impact on both staff and pupils of knowing that there is someone on hand to support children. There has been a reduction in the number of behavioural incidents among pupils supported by the Pastoral Mentor. Parents observe the Pastoral Mentor's trust, support and care having an impact on their children.

The school's online platform for tracking pastoral concerns demonstrates the impact of the PM's work, capturing referrals, progress made, issues addressed and, over time, successful closure of cases as pupils are supported through their challenges.

PRACTITIONER ADVICE

Whilst the Pastoral Mentor role can be articulated in terms of duties and responsibilities, the real essence of success lies in the personality of the post-holder. We were incredibly fortunate to appoint someone with an acute understanding of the issues Service pupils face (herself a service child, spouse and mother) but superb emotional intelligence and resilience is vital too; this role experiences pupils' significant emotional issues on a daily basis. A whole school approach is vital; so that the Pastoral Mentor does not become 'the answer' to every issue, clear procedures, messaging and CPD mechanisms remind all staff of the importance of collaboration and taking collective responsibility for pastoral needs.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND REFERENCES

<http://leeming-raf.n-yorks.sch.uk/school-information/pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium/>

Silver SEAL group work resources: <http://sealcommunity.org/>