

CASE STUDY



ESKDALE JUNIOR SCHOOL, NOTTINGHAM

Eskdale Junior School is situated near the border between Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. The school was judged to be outstanding in 2013.

25 of the 265 pupils on roll are from Service families predominantly stationed at the nearby Chetwynd Army barracks.



This junior school on the outskirts of Nottingham engaged Commando Joes, an evidence-based programme which provides bespoke interventions run by veterans, to support their Service children.

THE NEED

This school was faced with the need to establish a mechanism to support its Service pupils after losing a dedicated support worker.

SOLUTION TAKEN


The school investigated various options, looking to offer character education and deliver the best possible outcomes for pupils and prioritising schemes which would suit the school's clearly articulated aims for supporting Service children. Commando Joes' R.E.S.P.E.C.T curriculum was chosen for its fit with the school's aims. This decision was bolstered by the discovery that Commando Joes employs ex-service personnel who understand some of the challenges that Service pupils face.

The school's 'Commando Joe' worked with the school to devise a timetable of activities one day a week. This included a morning club for all pupils, welcoming the children into school, targeted work with Service pupils on the R.E.S.P.E.C.T character curriculum during the day and an after school club. He led a school assembly to introduce himself and wowed the children by proving he knew the school's core values.


Over time the school has modified the work their 'Commando Joe' does with Service children, incorporating positive mentoring into the day for pupils who have had a recent deployment in the family.

The school has worked with Commando Joes for three years, using funding from the MoD's Education Support Fund.

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 I definitely gained more confidence from the 1-2-1 sessions.

(Year 5 pupil)

 Commando Joe's generates a real enthusiasm and excitement to learn.

(Year 6 teacher)

WE ARE ALSO PROUD


of how Commando Joe has been instrumental in delivering our annual Camo Day to support Armed Forces day.

He has also led workshops and assemblies, engaged with the barracks and developed a specific area on the school website to reflect Commando Joe's work with Eskdale Juniors.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- Teachers have observed their Service pupils becoming increasingly adept at managing their social and emotional needs.
- Tracking of pupil progress against key indicators shows improvement over the three years.
- Teachers report an increase in Service pupil's confidence in tackling academic challenges. This cohort is now among the school's higher performing groups for both attainment and progress.
- Pupil questionnaires show an impact on social and emotional development, also evidenced by Commando Joes' judgement tool.
- Commando Joe's impact on the school's civilian pupils has been noticable and mutual understanding and support has been enhanced by the problem solving and physical activity club which is open to pupils from Service and civilian families.
- The school's communication with Service families has been improved by the revamp of the school website and direct access to Commando Joe to discuss any emerging needs.
- Pupils have a real sense of achievement and report their pride in receiving certificates in assembly from Commando Joe.

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 Commando Joe's encourages pupils to work practically and prepares them well with skills for life.

(year 6 teacher)

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.



PRACTITIONER ADVICE

- Be clear about your own principles and intended outcomes for your service pupils - Commando Joe may not be the best fit for your children.
- Always explore modifications to Commando Joes-we have got the best from our Commando Joe feeling part of school and therefore been able to engage in a two-way dialogue about how to modify the timetable to respond to pupil need.
- Meet regularly with your Commando Joe to gauge the impact that the sessions have having. Make sure this can be evidenced.
- Consult with the children regularly to ensure they are benefitting from the R.E.S.P.E.C.T character curriculum, but also enjoying it!

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL AND REFERENCES

<http://www.eskdale.notts.sch.uk/>

<https://commandojoes.co.uk>

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

