

CASE STUDY



ST MICHAEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, ESSEX

A primary school and nursery close to Colchester Garrison. 107 of the 264 pupils are Service children. Colchester is home to 16th Air Assault Brigade which is a rapid reaction force; parents can be deployed anywhere in the world at short notice. The school also experiences a constant inflow and outflow of Service children, with parents either being posted to, or posted away from Colchester.



This primary school near Colchester Garrison saw a need to support its Service children during experiences of mobility and deployment by improving their outdoor learning provision.

THE NEED

The school recognised the impact of separation and high mobility on their pupils and wanted to provide a welcoming environment to support children. Mindful of many children spending a significant portion of their home-time indoors engaged on iPads or computers, the school decided to create an outdoor learning environment.

SOLUTION TAKEN

The school engaged with both children and teaching staff to understand their priorities for outdoor learning. Based on these discussions, the school secured funding to install a wooden outdoor classroom with built-in seating which opens on to the existing wildlife area.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- Teaching staff have observed the outdoor classroom having a positive effect on pupils.
- Outdoor learning now takes place in all weather conditions.
- Teachers are evidencing high levels of attainment and engagement in their learning and observe that the outdoor learning broadens the experience of the children.

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●● The children love our outdoor learning area. Children flourish when the learning is taken outside, enabling them to develop life skills, team building and perseverance to name but a few.

(Headteacher)

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

- Think carefully about what you want to achieve. Be realistic with your aims.
- Engage with as many of the school's stakeholders as possible, including listening to pupils.
- Budget carefully to ensure there is no cost-overrun on the project.

WE ARE ALSO PROUD of the support mechanisms we have in place to support both army children and their parents. This ensures they are quickly integrated into the life of the school, to minimise the impact of mobility on children's education. Key to these support systems are the number of army spouses that are employed in all areas, and at all levels, of the school. This means that there is always an adult close-by who understands emotional issues which a child may be experiencing.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

www.stmichaelsprimary.co.uk